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Chinsetsu Yumiharizuki (Strange Tales of the Crescent Moon)

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Chapter One

Shinzei's¹ erudition favors Han Fei,²

Tametomo's³ nature leads to mastery of archery.

Tametomo, eighth son of the Rokujō Police Lieutenant Tameyoshi,⁴ was the direct descendant of the Governor of Mutsu and general of its imperial forces, Yoshiie,⁵ who was the seventh-generation descendant of Emperor Seiwa.⁶ At the time of his coming-of-age ceremony,⁷ Tametomo was already reputed to be without equal in wisdom and courage. He was seven feet tall with eyes as sharp as those of a wolf and arms as long as those of an ape. He excelled in strength, could bend the strongest bow, and was adept at shooting arrows in rapid succession. It was thus not to be wondered that it was in his nature to master the secrets of horsemanship and archery. His left arm was four inches longer than his right arm, allowing him to shoot unusually long arrows. From a very young age his views were far-sighted. He conceded nothing to his many older brothers, but in all things acted as he pleased. In the first year of Ninpei [1154] during the reign of Emperor Konoe,⁸ Tametomo had barely turned thirteen but in stature was in no way inferior to manly men of the world. His father, Tameyoshi always marveled, boasting: “I wonder what kinds of things he’ll accomplish someday. Though he is my own son, I must say that he is remarkably brave.”

At that time Emperor Toba⁹ (whose given name was Munehito), having reached the age of twenty-one on the twenty-eighth day of the first month of the preceding year, Hōan 4 [1123], relinquished the throne to Crown Prince Akihito, who on the twenty-ninth day of the sixth month of Jishō 1 [1177] was given the posthumous name of Sutoku.¹⁰ However, the government of the realm was directed in all matters great and small by the cloistered emperor (ex-Emperor Toba),

¹ Shinzei is the stylename of Fujiwara no Michinori (1106-1159), a noted Sinologist. In Bakin's text, the name is glossed as Shinsei, but the conventional reading of this and all other names will be followed in this translation.

² Han Fei, a philosopher of the “legalist” school in third century BCE China.

³ Minamoto no Tametomo (1139-1170).

⁴ Minamoto no Tameyoshi (1096-1156).

⁵ Minamoto no Yoshiie (1039-1106), the most famous of the Seiwa Genji, noted both as a military strategist and as a poet.

⁶ (850-880; r. 858-879). Those of his descendants who were lowered to commoner status were given the surname Minamoto, and came to be known as the Seiwa Genji.

⁷ This ceremony (*genpuku*) ordinarily took place sometime between a boy's eleventh and sixteenth years.

⁸ (1139-1155; r. 1141-1155).

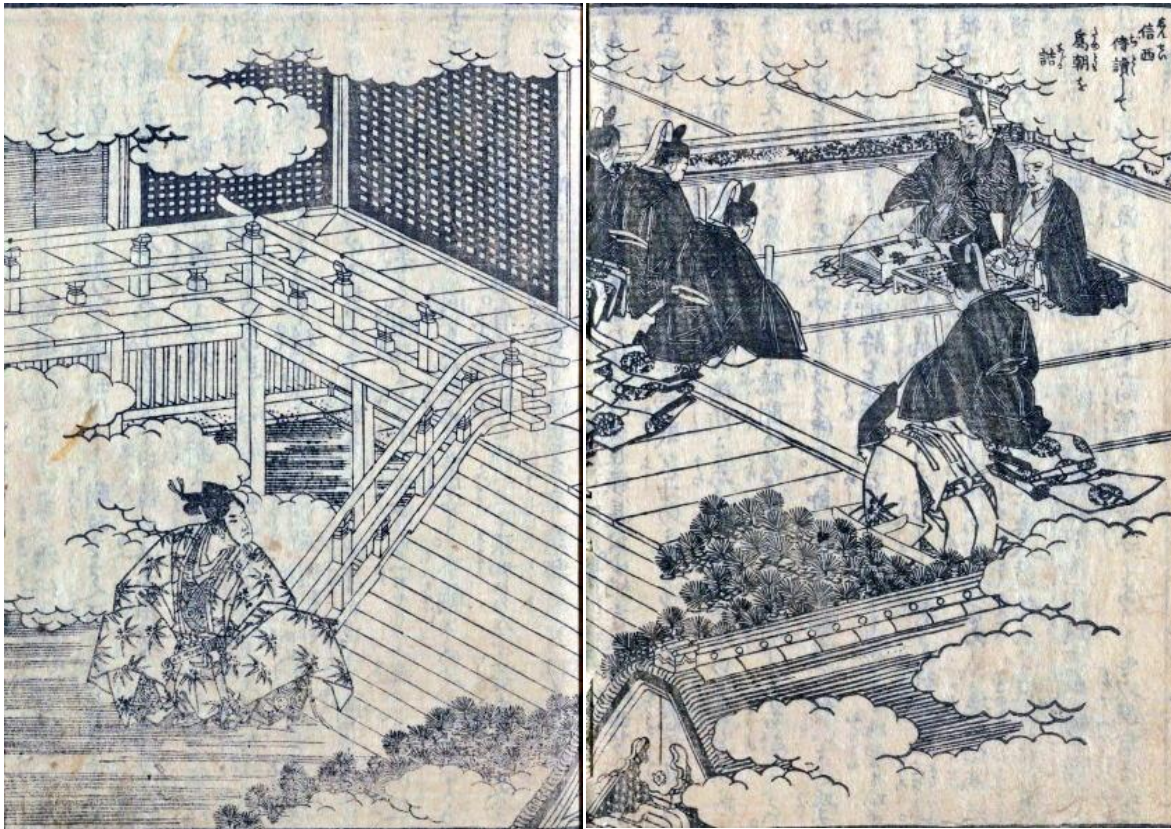
⁹ (1103-1156; r. 1107-1123).

¹⁰ (1119-1164; r. 1123-1141). Bakin glosses the name “Shutoku,” but the standard “Sutoku” will be used here.

whose consort Bifukumon'in¹¹ gave birth on the eighteenth day of the fifth month of Hōen 5 [1139] to a prince (Toshihito, later crowned as Emperor Konoe). The retired emperor was overjoyed and had him installed as crown prince. On the seventh day of the twelfth month of Eiji 1 [1141] the new prince, barely three years old, was crowned emperor and the former emperor (Sutoku) became the New Cloistered Emperor. This was all arranged by the First Cloistered Emperor (Toba), and so even the New Cloistered Emperor (Sutoku) could hardly object, but only harbor a deep resentment in his heart, and relations between father and son were not harmonious. Since he had given up the throne against his own will, as can only be expected with the customs of an ever-changing world, except for a few among the ministers including the Uji Minister of the Left Yorinaga¹² and the lay monk Junior Counselor Shinzei, no one allied themselves with the New Cloistered Emperor. Among warriors, only the Rokujō Police Lieutenant and his son occasionally came by to console him.

But one day, Tameyoshi heard that Junior Counselor Shinzei was to go to the New Cloistered Emperor's palace and recite from Han Fei, about whom he was a noted authority. Just

as



¹¹ (1117-1160), given name Fujiwara Tokuko.

¹² Fujiwara no Yorinaga (1120-1156).

Lord Tameyoshi was also leaving to listen to the recitation, he said, “There is nothing better for young people than to listen to this sort of thing. Of my many children, you, my eighth son, are especially bold in spirit, but I feel that you have not yet applied yourself well to learning. Even if you accompany me without official permission there will not be any particular censure, so come along.” Tametomo replied “Very well, sire,” and tidying his attire, set out with his retinue. Kneeling at the base of the staircase, he listened to Shinzei reciting in the distance.

Now the lay monk Junior Counselor Fujiwara no Michinori Shinzei was the eighth-generation descendant of Lord Nagayori of the Yamanoi Third Rank,¹³ the grandson of Suetsuna Governor of Echigo (or according to one theory, the grandson of Sanenori),¹⁴ and the son of Chamberlain Sanekane,¹⁵ who passed the imperial examination and had served during the reign of Cloistered Emperor Toba. Though a Confucian scholar of the southern branch of the Fujiwara, as the adopted son of the Takashina clan, [Sanekane’s son Shinzei] was not promoted to serve as a Confucian official in the government,¹⁶ but endowed with broad erudition and unusual talent, he excelled in various fields. Since his wife¹⁷ had served as nurse to Prince Masahito (Cloistered Emperor Goshirakawa) and was held in highest esteem by his cloistered majesty, [Shinzei] was even entrusted with the affairs of government, and though he seemed to be quite equal to the task, he applied exclusively the rules of Shin [Buhai]¹⁸ and Han [Fei], decreasing rewards and increasing punishments, almost to the extent of partiality in his judgments according to his personal relationships, and thus became the target of resentment by many people. Thus, though he basked in imperial favor, for some reason after relations between the older cloistered emperor and the new one had soured, he always appeared at the Shirakawa Palace (as Sutoku’s palace was called).

Was it because the New Cloistered Emperor was constantly thinking of raising an army? He secretly kept an eye on warriors of both the Minamoto and Taira clans, and at the conclusion of that day’s lecture, as he was asking Shinzei about ancient usages in both literary and martial arts, inquired, “Who in our land were the greatest archers in ancient times?” Shinzei replied, “There have been many such men in our imperial realm, but none equaled either Kibi no Omi

¹³ Descendant of Fujiwara no Fuhito (659-720).

¹⁴ The source of this theory is unclear.

¹⁵ Fujiwara no Sanekane (1085-1112).

¹⁶ Shinzei was adopted by Takashina no Tsunetoshi. Bakin glosses the surname “Takahashi.”

¹⁷ Asako, daughter of Fujiwara no Kanenage, Governor of Ki.

¹⁸ Shin Buhai (395-337 BCE), legalist philosopher. Han Fei was his most famous successor.

Okoshi¹⁹ and Tatehito no Sukune.²⁰ Then [his majesty] asked, “And in the present age?” [Shinzei] replied, “Kiyomori, Governor of Aki²¹ and Chief of Hyōgo, Yorimasa²² come to mind.”

Overhearing this, Tametomo burst out with a derisive guffaw. Casting a sharp glance, Shinzei demanded, “Such insolence! Who is that?” Tameyoshi replied, “He is my eighth son, the junior retainer Tametomo. Though not of status that would allow him attendance at [this gathering], since after the abdication he has found favor with his majesty, attending him without inhibition, I thought that although he did not have official permission, he might accompany me and sit outside to hear today’s lecture.”

Shinzei then rose from his seat, descended the stairs and, looking intently for some time at Tametomo’s countenance, said, “This youngster has a strange visage, with double pupils.²³ He couldn’t be more than fifteen years old, but he looks very mature.” Then he continued, “Why do you presume to approach his highness’s presence, and to mock me?”

Appearing quite unruffled by the disagreeable tone of Shinzei’s questioning, Tametomo replied, “I hear people say ‘The lay monk Michinori may be a great scholar, but his judgments betray partiality,’ and such comments are right on the mark after all. To say that Kiyomori and Yorimasa are the greatest archers of the present age is risible, and so I must bear the reproof of having inadvertently laughed. However, Yorimasa at least deserves some credit as a warrior. Kiyomori is ignorant of both martial and literary arts and has only the good fortune of imperial favor. It might seem like praise of one’s own for me to say so, but at the age of fourteen my father Tameyoshi received an imperial command to attack and vanquish the former governor of Mino, Yoshitsuna,²⁴ and at the age of eighteen, when there were reports that monks in Nara, resentful of the court, were planning an attack, he was ordered to go and repel them. It was sudden, leaving no time to assemble a force, so he galloped off to Mount Kurisu with only seventeen mounted soldiers and repelled several thousand mounted monks. Now he is advanced

¹⁹ The correct name is Kibi no Omi Oshiro (surname: Omi), commander of forces sent to subjugate Silla. According to the *Nihon shoki*, upon the death of Emperor Yūryaku (418-479; r. 456-479) he defeated 500 barbarians (*Ebisu*) with bow and arrows.

²⁰ Also known as Ikuha no Toda no Sukune, he brought steel shields and targets from Korea, presenting them to Emperor Nintoku (257-399; r. 313-399), then shot his arrows through the targets.

²¹ Taira no Kiyomori (1118-1181).

²² Minamoto no Yorimasa (1106-1180).

²³ A condition known as polycoria. According to such sources as *Shiji*, *Huainanzi*, and *Xiang Yu benji*, in ancient China double pupils were seen as a sign that a child was destined for greatness.

²⁴ Minamoto no Yoshitsuna (1042-1134).

in years and incapable of such things. Especially my older brother Yoshitomo²⁵ showed remarkable skill with bow and arrow.” Hearing this, Lord Tameyoshi knew that these arguments were nonsense and would only result in disaster. He thought at least to demand that his son withdraw from the premises, but being seated close to his highness, he could not very well give voice to a reprimand. On this occasion, Lord Yorinaga, Minister of the Left, arrived and, hearing this exchange, sat down with a provocative smile.

Then sidling up closer, Shinzei said, “Hey, imp, who says I’m partial in my judgments? It wasn’t long ago that Yorimasa gained fame for shooting down an ominous bird that was appearing nightly over the main hall of the imperial palace,²⁶ and Kiyomori, when he was Assistant Head of the Left Guards of the Imperial Gate, handily shot down [what was thought to be] an ominous bird in the palace. It fell into the sleeve of his robe, and when he took it out, it was an enormous rat. Cutting a length of bamboo from the south garden, he stuffed the rat inside and, burying it on the hill by Kiyomizu Temple, named it the Itchiku Mound. Everyone felt that this was a meritorious deed. These are all recent events, things you too know of first-hand. They are not at all matched by Tameyoshi’s campaign against his uncle Yoshitsuna, who would annihilate himself even if not attacked, or by his repulsion of the Nara crowd who lacked any skill in martial arts. And as for Yoshitomo, we have yet to hear any praise of his martial valor. So, do you still think I am partial in my judgments?”

Tametomo responded with even more derisive laughter. “Even hunters shoot down birds, and cats catch rats. You may be thoroughly versed in letters, but what do you know about archery? You wouldn’t be able to tell one person from another after all. Out of anyone in the present age who takes up bow and arrow to repel a strong enemy force of a million, none could outdo me.”

Though at first at a loss for words, laughter soon broke Shinzei’s silence. “Well, you’re a big talker, aren’t you? It takes many long years to achieve competence in the art of archery and it is difficult to attain mastery. Even if you had begun while still in diapers, you’re now barely in your teens. Think about it. People are not just puppets; if I want to shoot someone, he will also shoot me. As they say, ‘One who shoots well is also one who defends himself well.’ Ought you to test your skills now?”

²⁵ Minamoto no Yoshitomo (1123-1160).

²⁶ This incident is described in the fourth chapter of *The Tale of the Heike*.

Paying him no heed, Tametomo said, “At the age of eight, Pu Yi became the teacher to Shun, and at the age of five, Boyi was put in charge of [maintaining] fires.²⁷ Neither wisdom nor ability should be argued in terms of age. Please let me shoot arrows, as fast as you command. I’ll easily show you what I can do, even with the arrows of Buddha’s compassionate wisdom.”²⁸

At first, Shinzei was of a mind to chastise the boy roundly, but since Tametomo still showed no sign of giving in, he was filled with indignation and, determined to show the measure of his power, stood up and shouted, “Someone, bring a bow and arrows immediately!” Tametomo replied, “I accept the challenge.” Then two court guards, Norishige and Norikazu, approached the staircase bearing bows and arrows. Having apprised them of the situation, Shinzei added, “Each of you shoot an arrow at this brat.” Both of these court guards first served in the Imperial Warrior Office under cloistered emperor Shirakawa²⁹ and their arrows always hit their target. After emperor Toba abdicated, both were appointed as court guards. Once one of them was given a three-foot five-inch target and told to strike it down on the second ring from the bullseye, then to bring the target back. He was given the target at the hour of the serpent [10 a.m.] and returned the fallen target at the hour of the ram [2 p.m.]. Everyone praised him fulsomely, saying that he was the equal of Yang Youji.³⁰ Now he is advanced in years, but his vigor remains unchanged. It did not seem that Tametomo would be able to dodge their arrows even if he had six elbows.³¹

Unable to watch any longer, the Minister of the Left Lord Yorinaga turned to Shinzei and said, “Tametomo may be large in stature, but he’s just a smart-mouthed boy, and it’s his idea of a joke. It’s not like you to react this way.” Next he turned to Tameyoshi. “Have your son leave immediately.”

Until that moment Tameyoshi had remained silent, but now respectfully responded, “Tametomo is already thirteen years old and is no longer a child. If on this occasion he does not see this matter to its conclusion, he would never be fit to face an enemy host without looking back. He is not worth your concern. What I resent is his sully of the long-standing martial

²⁷ Shun was the last of the legendary sage emperors, said to have lived between 2294 and 2184 BCE. According to *Zhuangzi*, at the age of eight Pu Yi served as his teacher. Also, *Wuzazu* records: “At the age of eight, Pu Yi became the teacher of Shun ... at the age of five, Boyi was in charge of fire.”

²⁸ The Bosatsu uses bow and arrow to dispel evil spirits. A line from the noh play *Tamura* reads: “When with each of his thousand hands he once shoots arrows of wisdom from his bow of compassion ...”

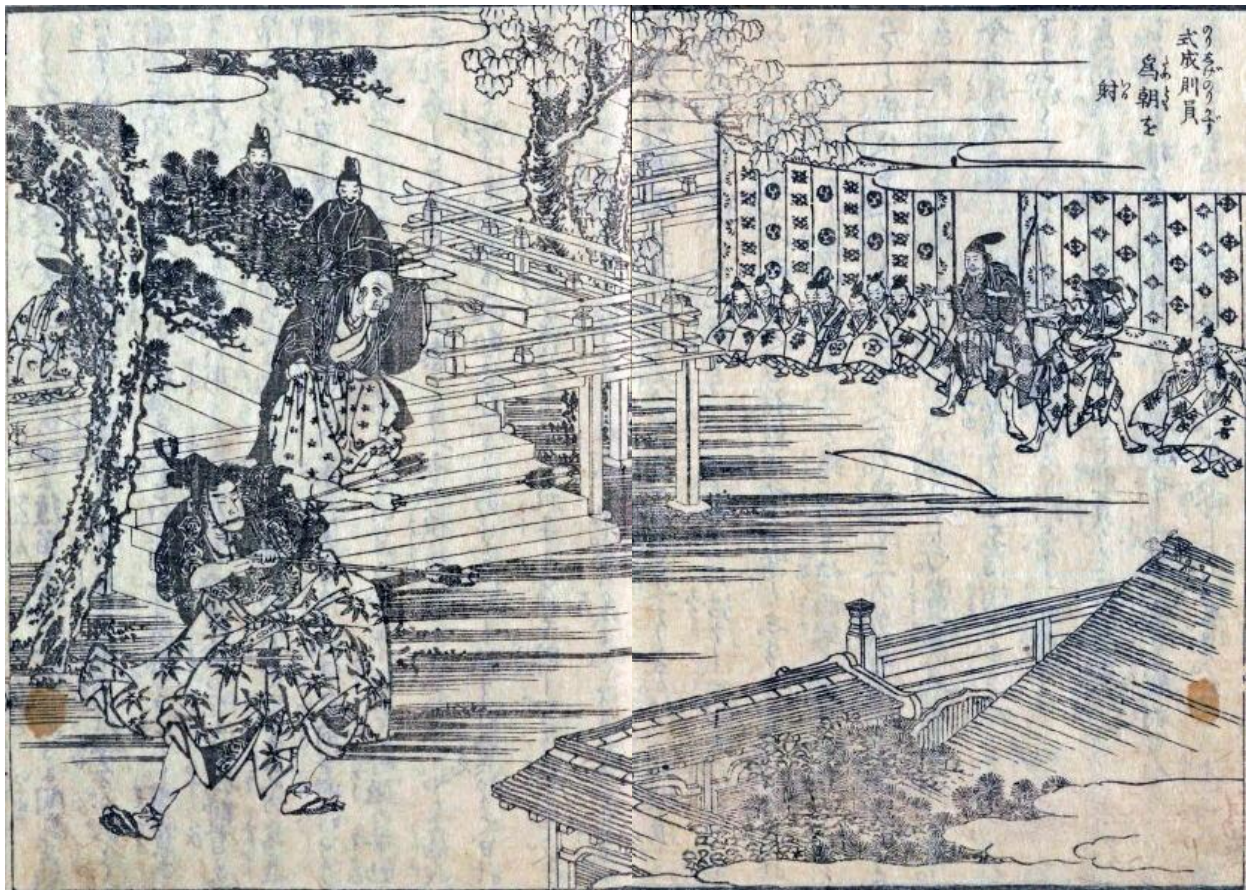
²⁹ 1053-1129; r. 1073-1087.

³⁰ D. 539 BCE., famous Chinese archer of the Spring and Autumn period.

³¹ This is an allusion to a scene in *Shuihuzhuan*.

reputation of the Minamoto clan. With all my heart begging your pardon, please do as he wishes, and let the outcome be whatever it may.”

Tametomo eagerly turned to Shinzei, saying, “Norishige and Norikazu are archers without equal, and I am greatly pleased to be their target. However, if I fail to catch their arrows, my life will end on the spot. I put my life in your hands. But if I succeed in catching the arrows, what will you give me?” Shinzei smiled. “If you succeed in catching them, I’ll give you this head of mine. I’m in the Buddhist priesthood. If you are now killed with arrows, there will be no evil retribution after your death,” he said with a note of derision. Not minding him, Tametomo dashed out into the courtyard and stood an appropriate distance from the archers. Being veterans of the art, Norishige and Norikazu looked on the scene and thought it shameful. To trifle with weaponry in the court of the cloistered emperor to the extent of taking delight in killing someone would exceed even the evil deeds of Emperor Buretsu.³² Shinzei pressed them on. “What are you waiting for? Hurry up!” Having no choice, they each took out two arrows as designated and stood in their positions. His highness and all present were perspiring with nervous anticipation,



³² 489-507; r. 499-507, he was noted for his excessive cruelty.

certain that Tametomo's life was about to vanish like dew before the morning sun. Then Norishige placed an arrow in his bow and, pulling it taut, shouted as he let it fly. Tametomo caught it with his right hand. Immediately thereafter, as Norikazu's arrow approached his chest, Tametomo caught it with his left hand. Filled with chagrin at not having struck him—even if they had not killed him, at least not to have their arrows caught—the two archers drew their bows taut and, watching for the right moment, let their arrows fly. Tametomo caught one with the sleeve of his robe, and since there was no time to catch the second one with his hands, he bit it firmly, at once grinding the arrowhead to bits. It all happened like a shimmer rising in the air, or like a flash of lightning, and did not seem at all like a feat any human could perform. Those looking on shouted praise as if intoxicated. Casting the captured arrows to both sides, Tametomo could not restrain himself from saying “Now I'll get that priest's bald head” and, jumping up onto the staircase, was about to take hold of Shinzei.

His father, Tameyoshi, intervened, shoving him aside and chastised him saying, “There is nothing unusual if someone born as a warrior happens to dodge some arrows. Think of your position in society. Your barbarous actions are rash and lack decorum.”

Observing this, Lord Yorinaga said, “Don't be too hard on him, Tameyoshi. And neither should Shinzei bear any grudges. Long ago there were two children arguing about whether the sun is closer at its rising or its setting, and even Confucius was at a loss to answer.³³ This is the same as lay monk Michinori now being unable to defeat Tametomo. This is enough for now. Both of you please withdraw.” Not taking sides, he placated both parties. Sutoku had for some time harbored intentions which he had secretly discussed with the Minister of the Left and, having observed the spectacle involving Tametomo, thought that he might be of use sometime. Sutoku was deeply impressed, offering praise which redounded to the honor of Tameyoshi as well. Father and son then took their leave. From that time hence, Tametomo's fame increased.

³³ This appears in the “Tang wen pian” chapter of *Liezi*. “Once, when Confucius was walking through a marketplace, he saw two children who looked like they were arguing heatedly over something. Confucius got curious and went over to ask them what their contention was. One child said, ‘I say the sun is nearer us when it is rising and gets farther away at midday.’ The other child immediately said, ‘I say the sun is farther away when it is rising and nearer us at midday.’ The one who spoke first then said, ‘The sun looks bigger when it is at the horizon and gets smaller as it reaches noon. Don't things look smaller when they are far away and bigger when they are near?’ The second child was not daunted. He said, ‘The sun is hotter at noon than when it rises in the morning. Isn't something hotter when it is near and cooler when it is farther away?’ Both children then pestered Confucius to answer their questions. Confucius was stumped. He told them he couldn't tell which of them was correct. The children laughed and said, ‘Hey, you're supposed to be a learned man, and you can't even answer our questions!’” *Lieh-tzu: A Taoist Guide to Practical Living*, trans. Eva Wong (Boston: Shambala, 1995), 139.

Thus, Shinzei bore bitter malice toward Tameyoshi and his son, often attempting to bring them down through slander. But finally the Hōgen armed disturbance broke out, and Sutoku had no choice but to enlist Tameyoshi's service. Unable to refuse, Tameyoshi led six of his sons³⁴ in support of his highness, but they were outnumbered and Sutoku was exiled to Matsuyama in the province of Sanuki. Now the lay monk Michinori Shinzei's hatred of Tameyoshi and his son was so strong that he ordered the resumption of capital punishment that had long been abandoned,³⁵ first beheading the corpse of the Minister of the Left Lord Yorinaga which he had exhumed from Hannyano³⁶ and then rounding up Tameyoshi and all the warriors who had sided with Sutoku, had their severed heads exposed. Perhaps as a sequel to this evil, Shinzei engaged in a power struggle with Counselor Nobuyori,³⁷ which was soon followed by the Heiji disturbance. Seeing an astrological omen that he might lose his head, he fled the capital and hid in a hole at Daijōji in the remote area of Tahara.³⁸ Though buried alive there, enemy soldiers dug his corpse out and exposed his head in the riverbed at Rokujō in the capital. Indeed, Shinzei put on scholarly airs while snubbing others and taking no thought of the resentment of the masses because of his harsh punishments. Everyone cursed him, saying that he had received his just deserts.

³⁴ Yorikata, Yorinaka, Tamemune, Tamenari, Tametomo, and Tamenaka.

³⁵ Between 810 and 1156, no executions were carried out in Japan.

³⁶ The site of a crematorium in Yamato prefecture.

³⁷ Fujiwara no Nobuyori (1133-1160).

³⁸ In Yamashiro province.

Chapter Two

Lost on the way, he allays the fighting of wolves.

Accompanied to a house, he is offered monkey wine.

That same day, upon returning home Tameyoshi summoned Tametomo and said, “With no regard for his highness’ august presence and while yet in your adolescence, why did you show no respect for your elders and resort to such impudence? ‘Filial piety achieves its final consummation with one’s own self-establishment.’¹ To lose yourself in a transitory dispute and make yourself a target for Norishige and Norikage is to act like a madman. Even in the military code it says, ‘When a commander becomes arrogant, he will certainly be defeated.’ Which is also to say, ‘A wise person does not quarrel, and a person of ability is not haughty.’² Should I call your behavior today disloyal, or unfilial? Henceforth, be very discreet in your conduct.”

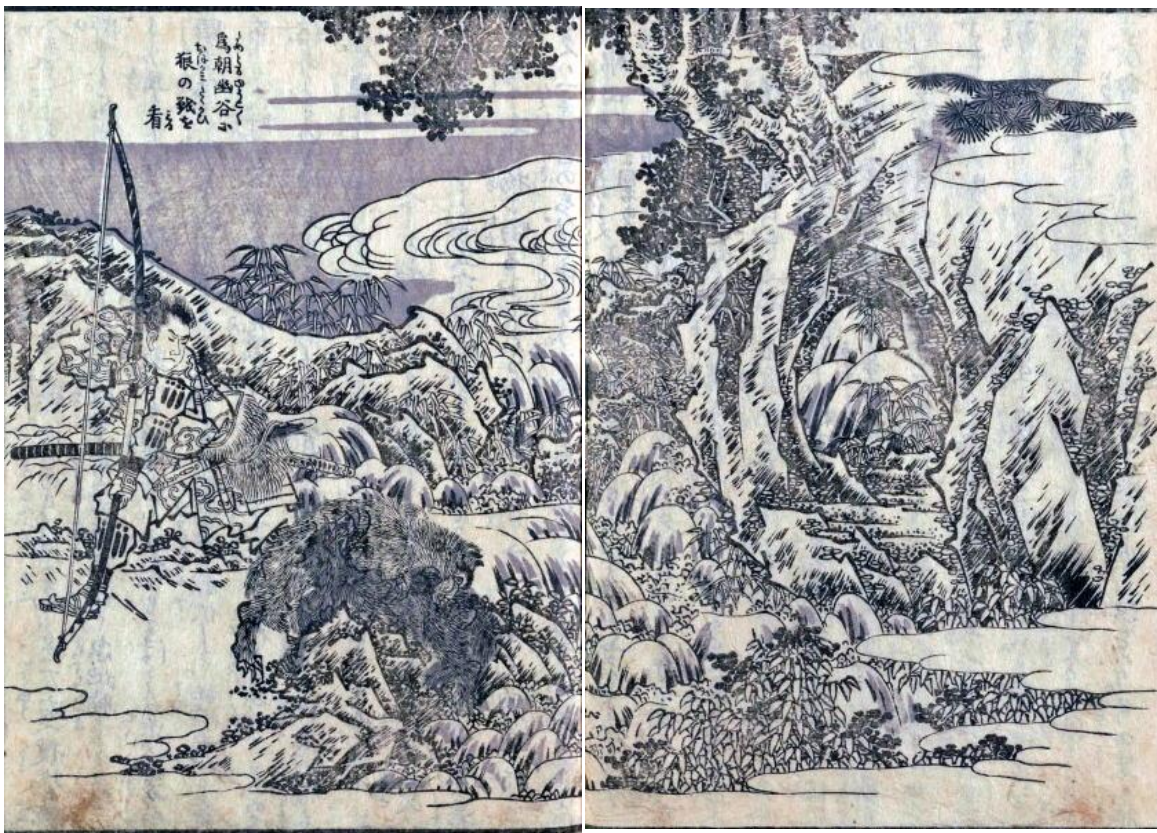
Tametomo listened respectfully to his father’s precepts, then in a low voice said in all seriousness, “Such is your command, father. But the lay monk Michinori Shinzei is a corrupt flatterer who makes a pretense of wisdom. He received the favor of Retired Emperor Toba and is on close terms now with cloistered emperor Konoe. Given what others might say, one would expect him to be estranged from Cloistered Emperor Sutoku, but his cozying up to his highness does not reflect his true intentions. Rather he is a spy, secretly observing his highness’s court and reporting to the Retired Emperor anything that strikes him as suspicious. I have been aware of this for some time, and planned my words today to anger him so that he would never again tread on his highness’s dignity.” After a pause, Tameyoshi again spoke, “From ancient times it has been said, ‘Do not fear those in control, fear being controlled.’ If he were to harbor deep malice toward us, he would destroy our family with his eloquent lies. Set out for Kyushu tomorrow to avoid disaster. But if some aim occurs to you, do not write to me about it. Now hurry and prepare to leave.” Seeing his father’s stern countenance, Tametomo made no reply.

The next morning, accompanied only by his nurse’s son Sutō Kurō Shigesue, he set out for the farthest reaches of Kyushu as the moon was sinking in the west leaving stars of early dawn in the yet dim sky over the capital. After several days he arrived in the province of Bungo, where there lived a relative, a man of renown, the provisional governor Suetō. Tametomo asked

¹ From *The Classic of Filial Piety (Xiao jing)*, chapter one.

² Sources of these quotes have not been identified.

him for assistance and Suetō readily took him in, supporting him for three years. Then, at fifteen years of age, advanced in learning and skill, outstanding in wisdom and bravery and having immersed himself in the classics and books of strategy, he again took up bow and arrow and went out hunting in Mount Yū. One day as he went deeper into the mountains, he lost his way and no matter how far he went, was unable to find the path he had first taken. Ahead under a tree he saw two wolf cubs fighting over a piece of deer flesh. In mortal combat, they were biting each other until they were half covered in blood with no sign of victory or defeat for either. For some time Tametomo stood still and watched, pondering how people in the present age hide daggers behind smiles and calculate affinity or enmity according to personal advantage. Those who envy people of rank or who quarrel over paltry stipends—fathers and sons who make enemies of each other, or brothers who take up arms against each other—do not differ from these wolves. These two battling beasts were like intermediaries drawing him to reflection. Muttering to himself that he would like to save them, he then turned to them and said, “You’re such ferocious beasts, fighting over food, but if you wound and weaken each other, you’ll just make it easy for me to



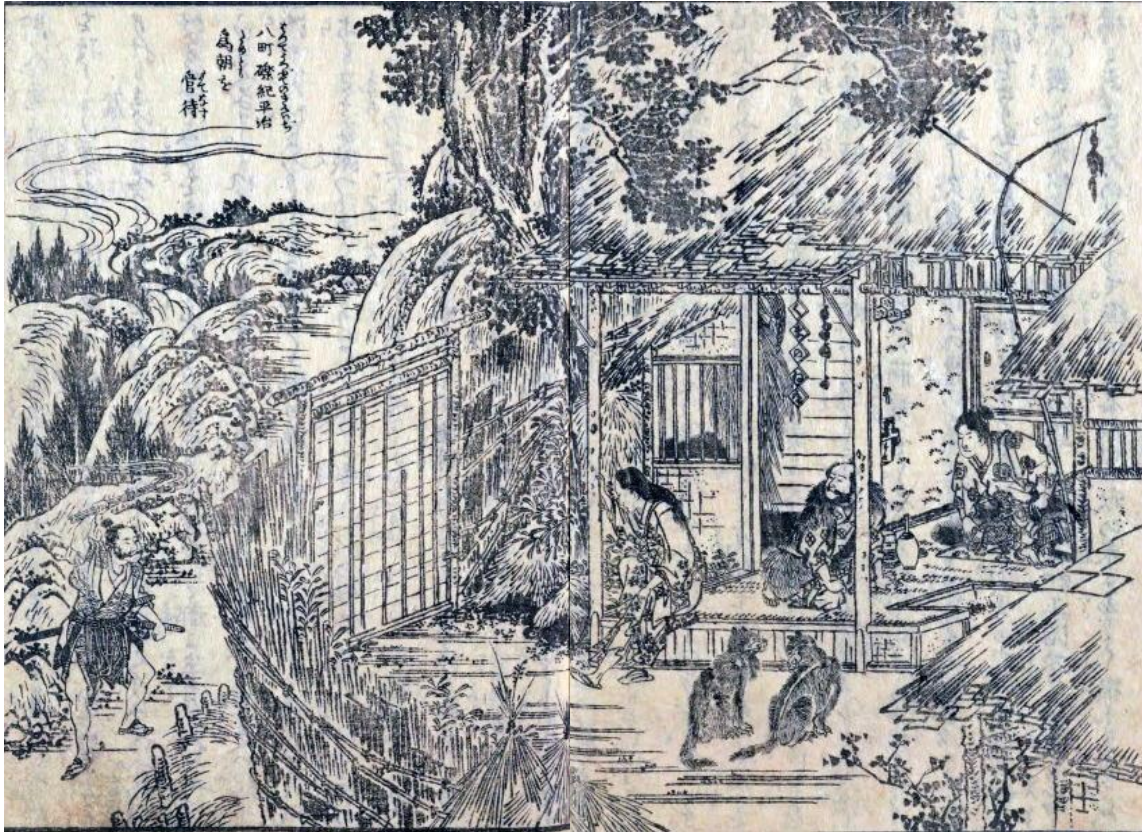
bag two animals. If you look for other food, you could find it. Once any living thing puts its life on the line, there is no way out. Stop fighting, now!” Then he inserted the tip of his bow between them and with all his might flipped them apart, the strength of the bow sending the two wolves tumbling right and left. They no longer looked menacing, but instead showed affection, licking each other’s bleeding wounds. Then, after looking at Tametomo carefully for some time, they came close to him, bowing their heads as if to thank him for his kindness. “Well now, they were overcome by my words and are reconciled. If a human resorts to cunning bravery, he’s a match for savage beasts. Now that I look on this scene, they seem rather to possess a sense of righteousness and trust. They are not such loathsome creatures after all.” As he patted them on their heads, their tails wagged and their ears drooped, and they appeared quite tame. Eventually they began walking quietly ahead, occasionally looking back as if to lead him, and Tametomo, quickly understanding their intent, followed their lead for a mile or so. Then for some reason the wolves curled their tails and came running back as if they were afraid of something. Tametomo was staring ahead with great foreboding when out of a dense growth of tall grass a man appeared.

His attire consisted of a kerchief of deer hide on his head, on his torso a crude garment woven from fibers of mulberry bark, on his legs gaiters made from the bark of hemp palm, and on his waist he carried a long sword. He was six feet tall and appeared to be over thirty years old. Though he gave the impression of being a hunter, he carried no bow. Thinking he might be a bandit or highwayman, with no hesitation Tametomo grasped his bow and was looking intently at him when he approached and offered a courteous greeting. “You must be the young master Hachirō for whom the people of Kyushu have great admiration lately. I saw how you tamed these wolves just now, as if you had raised them for a long time. You no doubt hold me in suspicion, but I am a hunter, and my name is Kiheiji. My grandfather originally came from the kingdom of Ryukyu. One year his boat drifted to Kyushu and he ended up staying in Japan, serving the Kikuchi family of Higo.³ After my grandfather died, owing to circumstances my father became a *rōnin* and moved here to Bungo, but having no means of livelihood spent his life as a hunter, and I have maintained that occupation down to the present. Since my father’s time, we have used neither bow nor sword to hunt game, but have only aimed with small stones, achieving a perfect record of hitting our targets. If I aim at anything within half a mile, I never fail to bring down a

³ The Kikuchi family was descended from Fujiwara no Takaie (979-1044), regional governor of Dazaifu.

fast bird or a ferocious beast. Thus, people have all given me the nickname Half-mile Stone-throwing Kiheiji. Though I live here in the backwoods, I'm not without some ambition to make a name for myself in the world. I've heard reports of your attainments in the literary and martial arts and of your devotion to humanity. Though filled with such intense desire, I'm of low status and cut a seedy figure, but unexpectedly gazing on your noble countenance here deep in the mountains, I count it as some kind of good fortune." Listening to him, Tametomo understood why these wolves were afraid of Kiheiji, and saw it as evidence of his skill at casting stones. Deeply impressed, he answered politely, relating how he had lost his way and had encountered the wolves. Kiheiji responded with earnest admiration, "Your virtue affects even beasts, showing both blessing and wisdom. Since you have been lost an entire day, you must be very hungry. My home is at the foot of the mountain, and if you don't mind such a humble abode, please stop by and rest for a while." Tametomo could hardly refuse and accompanied him toward the foot of the mountain with the two wolves following behind until they reached the gate.

Opening the dilapidated double door to his dwelling, Kiheiji invited Tametomo inside, then called his wife and explained to her what had transpired. Being able and diligent like her husband, she set about preparing rice with millet and broiled sweetfish to offer to their guest. Taking off his straw sandals, Kiheiji also entered, saying "I should like to introduce you to my wife, Yatsushiro," to which Tametomo responded, "The pleasure is all mine." Then Kiheiji took out a bottle of liquor to treat his guest. Tametomo drank some and discovered that it had an unusual flavor, similar to grape wine. "What is this brewed from?" "It's from something hard to find here in the mountains and is called monkey wine. Toward the end of autumn, the monkeys gather a lot of nuts and store them in the hollows of old trees or in the recesses of crags. With the passing months the nuts completely break down and naturally ferment into a sort of liquor. Even those of us who make our homes in the mountains don't often come across it, but recently I found some, drew it out, and brought it home." Tametomo clapped his hands, saying, "I had heard that such a thing existed in the mountains, but having grown up in the capital, I've never seen it. If I hadn't wandered here, how would I ever have been treated to it?" Overjoyed at



hearing that, Kiheiiji offered more, but then muttered to himself, “I’ve forgotten something. They must be hungry too.” Going out to the gate, he called to the two wolves and threw to them the sliced leg of a deer. Kiheiiji laughed when Yatsushiro was shocked and surprised to at that, but regained her composure after he explained what had happened.

Going back inside, as Kiheiiji resumed his discussion of various topics with Tametomo, which also included a debate about military tactics. Tametomo’s elucidations included so much that Kiheiiji had never even heard of that he was in awe of his guest and ended up concluding an agreement to be his disciple. Much time had passed as they were talking and it was getting dark, and just as Tametomo was about to take his leave, his nurse’s son Sutō Kurō Shigesue made his way to where they were. Worried about his master, Shigesue had lit a torch and searched the area. Tametomo called to him and told him about Kiheiiji and the wolves. He was glad to hear of the couple’s kindness. As he was accompanying his master on their return, the wolves followed. Attempts to shoo them away were to no avail. Since they steadfastly remained outside Tametomo’s room, he took pity on them, naming one Yamao and the other Nokaze, and kept them as if they were domestic dogs.

Chapter Three

Yamao loses his head as he saves his master,
Shigesue loses his life as he secures the jewel.

Having met Half-mile Stone-throwing Kiheiji, young Hachirō Tametomo was very fond of him and sought nothing other than visiting him at his house and going hunting with him. They always took one of the wolves with them on their excursions into the mountains and, naturally acting like hunting dogs, the wolf would flush out wild boars and deer, often not surrendering them to its master. When the wolves would present the game having first been bitten to death, Sūtō Shigesue would venture to remonstrate with his master, saying “You are directly descended from the Seiwa Genji¹ and are suited to become governor of a great province. Just because you have been disowned by your father, you should not quickly forget the way of the warrior and become a hunter. As the sayings go, ‘Upbringing is more important than lineage,’ and ‘He who dabbles with vermillion will end up red.’”

Tametomo replied in a low voice, smiling, “What you say is reasonable. But though I have now become a drifter, my resolution has not changed. The provisional governor Suetō, being of limited talent and envious of intelligence, detests anyone who bests him. Since I am receiving his support, if I spend the time as object of his contempt and ‘have no consideration for what is distant,’ then ‘disaster will arise right before me.’² So, I spend the days hunting in the mountains and seek nothing else in order to put Suetō’s mind at ease. Look at the game I’ve bagged. I’ll give all of this to Kiheiji to help with his livelihood. Thus you should know that I am not craving minor advantage or hunting in the mountains just for the fun of it.” Deeply impressed with this reply, Shigesue appeared very pleased as he courteously said, “It was rash of me to have remonstrated with you so impertinently, not understanding the situation.”

And so the year came to an end and it was already the third month in spring. Tametomo was in his sixteenth year, already a grown man. Seeing him, it occurred to Shigesue that if he were in the capital, he would be inducted into civil service and then rise through the ranks of officialdom, but instead he was wandering about in this sparsely populated backcountry living

¹ The Seiwa Genji (Minamoto) were a high-ranking family descended from Emperor Seiwa (850-881).

² The first of these is from chapter 15 of the *Analects*: 人無遠慮，必有近憂 “If a man does not consider what is distant, sorrow will be near at hand”; the second is from a saying, 蕭牆禍起, “Trouble starts at home,” that is based on an incident described in the *Analects*, chapter 16.

with just one disciple. And though it was meant as part of his punishment, four years had passed without a single letter. His lord was stout of heart while regretting the dreariness of the world, appreciating sincerity all the more. And so, one day before dawn Tametomo took up bow and arrow and, accompanied by the wolf Yamao, set out for Mount Yū. Sutō Shigesue tugged at his master's sleeve, saying, "I had a horrible dream last night, and even after awakening I feel agitated and am not at ease. Please, don't go hunting in the mountains today."

Before he finished speaking, Tametomo broke in with a laugh, "As they say, 'Dreams are the work of the five viscera.'³ It's just for women to find warnings in such things. Be at ease and watch the place while I'm gone." Shigesue again spoke up, "The ancients also said, 'Approach matters with caution.'⁴ But if you insist on going, let me accompany you." Since Shigesue repeatedly begged to go, Tametomo relented, saying, "If you want to go that badly, how could I refuse? Come along." Overjoyed, Shigesue lit the way with a torch and set out with his master.

Now then, master and disciple stopped by at Kiheiji's home at the foot of Mount Yū, thinking to invite him to go with them. Yatsushiro came out and first of all offered them a bath, adding, "Kiheiji set out for the mountain before daybreak. But he hasn't been gone long, so you should be able to catch up with him halfway up the mountain." And so master and disciple set out in a hurry, trusting their legs to carry them deep into the mountain. The sky had not yet begun to brighten and since their way forward was still dark they did not find Kiheiji after all. They had run quickly and were fatigued, so they sat down on a stump beneath an ancient camphor tree to wait for the dawn. They were both overcome with sleepiness and had just dozed off when Yamao barked loudly and tugged at his master's leather leggings. Both Tametomo and Shigesue awoke with a start and glanced about but saw nothing out of the ordinary. Thinking that Yamao just wanted to play, they went back to sleep. But the wolf again began howling forcefully and seemed about to bite him. Giving the animal a hard look, Tametomo raged, "The saying is true that 'Though one might tame a wild beast, it is impossible to raise it.'⁵ This beast waited until I was asleep for a chance to devour me. I'll show it what it has coming!" Grasping the hilt of his sword he glared at the wolf for some time. Shigesue was also on his guard, ready to draw his sword and cut the animal down. But Yamao appeared undaunted by this and, again howling two or three

³ The five viscera are liver, lungs, heart, kidney, and spleen.

⁴ In chapter 7 of the *Analects*: 必也臨事而懼、好謀而成者也 "One must approach matters cautiously and plan well, then they will come to completion."

⁵ The source of this saying is unclear.

times, seemed about to lunge toward them. Shigesue leaped up and with a swish of his sword cut off the wolf's head, which looked as if it went clear to the top of the camphor tree. As blood was dripping down, something else fell from the top. A crashing sound reverberated in the ground. Both master and disciple were alarmed and wary, and by the dim light of the predawn stars were able to see an enormous serpent, its body as thick as the trunk of the camphor tree and of immeasurable length, with the wolf's head in its jaws. The snake was still writhing with half of its body still wrapped around the tree. Drawing their swords, both master and disciple pierced it again and again until it was dead.

Tametomo felt a deep sense of shame. "This huge serpent in



the treetop was about to swallow us, and Yamao tried to draw our attention to it with his howling and tugging at our clothing. It was foolish of us to see that only as an attack. Even though he was killed by Shigesue's sword, he laudably was determined to use his head to save his master. How wrong it was of us!" Shigesue was even more ashamed and, after shedding copious tears, finally said in a voice full of remorse, "The dream that I saw last night must have been an omen of this.

Even a wolf, after all, can feel a debt of gratitude and give its life to defeat its master's enemy. I'm not even the equal of a beast, and while I've been in service these many years, I have not been able to repay my lord's favor, but rather in killing Yamao, there is no end to the shame I feel. What shall I do?" Tametomo commiserated with him and tried to calm him.

At that time, daylight was increasing and clouds were visibly rising above the mountain range. What had been a clear sky was becoming overcast and a strong wind suddenly began to blow. Though it was the beginning of the third month, lightning flashed ceaselessly, thunder rolled frighteningly, creating a spectacle appearing as if it would descend on him from above.

After looking intently for some time at rifts between the clouds, Tametomo said, "I have heard it said that after several hundred years, serpents will always have a jewel in their bodies.⁶ Dragons are aware of this, and in order to take the jewel send thunderbolts to shake the earth. I think there must be a jewel inside this serpent. Shigesue, cut it open and see." Readily agreeing, Shigesue again plunged his sword into the creature's throat, and as he was about to slice it open, rain fell as if from an overturned bucket and the thunder grew more intense. Thinking that if the lightning might strike, he would shoot an arrow into it, Tametomo fitted one into his bow and stepped back. Though completely drenched, Shigesue did not mind the thunder and lightning. He had already cut the serpent down to its tail, but could not see anything. Thinking that if there was a jewel, it might be in the head, he again took up his sword and, peeling the skin off its head and feeling beneath its jaw, there was indeed something between the bones. He was delighted, thinking "This must be it," but just as he was about to extract it, everything was enveloped in pitch darkness as a black cloud descended on him and a bolt of thunder fell, shaking heaven and earth. Tametomo sent an arrow flying which seemed to hit something, and immediately the rain stopped and the clouds cleared, revealing a rising sun in the east. Worried about Shigesue, Tametomo ran toward him only to find him with his head smashed open, his flesh torn, his entire body smouldering, and his disconnected hand still grasping his sword. In his lifeless left hand was a jewel. The thunderbolt had fallen here, and the camphor tree with its trunk ten arm spans thick was split in two, from its top to its root, as if it had been cut open with an axe, but Tametomo had no eyes for that; he was only distraught about Shigesue's tragic death. In high

⁶ This claim appears in *Wuzazu*.



spirits and taking pride in his valor, twice he had asked Shigesue to face danger, first when he mistakenly had him kill Yamao, and now resulting in the loss of his companion. Could even the most priceless gem be traded for a loyal retainer? Especially for one who in his youth had served faithfully under hardship, who shared his thoughts candidly and thoughtfully, including the abhorrence from his ominous dream, that it should be his destiny to die here. And yet, though he did not ordinarily strike one as remarkably valorous, in spite of the threat of thunder and lightning, he successfully obtained the jewel. His fealty was greater than that of Lin Xiangru.⁷ Tametomo was filled with remorse, thinking what a senseless thing he had done, and felt even more dispirited. But he reconsidered and, determining not to let Shigesue's aim come to naught, took the jewel and saw that it shone as resplendently as the full moon, and that it was without equal in the world.

Someone, soaking wet, was approaching from the path along the opposite cliff, and it turned out to be none other than Half-mile Stone-throwing Kiheiji who, recognizing the master,

⁷ D. 260 BCE., minister to King Wuling of Zhao during the Warring States period, is often cited as a model of loyalty.

ran up to him. Greatly shocked to see Shigesue dead from lightning strike as well as the corpse of Yamao and the serpent, he asked what had happened. Grieved and tearful, Tametomo told him everything, leaving Kiheiji even more shocked. Deeply saddened by Shigesue's death and lamenting the loss of Yamao, he dug a pit at the base of the camphor tree and buried Shigesue in it with Yamao off to the side. "What shall we use to mark the grave?" Tametomo brought two large stones, carrying them as if they were nothing, to use as markers. Chanting "May the departed souls be reborn in paradise, escape pain and achieve bliss," he descended the mountain together with Kiheiji. An aged crane was caught in the branches of a pine tree protruding from the peak on the opposite side of a narrow ravine, its attempts to fly away proving futile. From a distance Tametomo saw it desperately flapping its wings and said, "Some kind of cord is attached to that bird's leg, and that's what is caught in the branches preventing it from flying." Nodding in response, Kiheiji said, "Then I'll bring it down with a stone," and took aim. Tametomo hurriedly stopped him. "A stone would kill it, and that would be the end. Let me shoot an arrow to release it without harm. That could be a life release ceremony,⁸ and a memorial service for the repose of Shigesue's soul." Taking aim, he let an arrow fly. Immediately leaving the branch, the crane descended to the stream at the bottom of the ravine, remaining there. Climbing down hand over hand grasping bamboo grass and wisteria vines, Kiheiji was finally able to reach the bottom of the ravine. Then, taking the crane in his arms, he climbed back up the same way. "This crane's wings seem to be badly hurt, and it can't fly. Look, there is a small gold chain attached to its leg, and that's what was caught in the branches. It appears that your arrow cleanly broke the chain, releasing it from the branch. But when I looked around where it had fallen, there was a golden tag next to it, so I picked that up as well." Engraved on the tag was: "Released by Minamoto Yoshiie on the tenth day of the third month of the sixth year of Kōhei [1063]."

Amazed, Tametomo said, "A long time ago in the province of Mutsu my great great grandfather Yoriyoshi and his son put many rebels to death during the Zenkunen War.⁹ Deeply lamenting this, after subduing Sadatō and Munetō¹⁰ he cut off the ears of the fallen soldiers and took them to the capital, where he buried them next to the Nishinotoi River north of Rokujō

⁸ *Hōjōe*, the Buddhist ceremonial releasing of a captive animal.

⁹ Also known as the "Former Nine Years' War," a battle between imperial forces led by Minamoto no Yoriyoshi (988-1075) and his son Yoshiie (1039-1106) against the rebel forces of the Emishi led by the Abe clan.

¹⁰ Abe no Sadatō (1019-1062) and his brother Munetō (1032-1108).

Bōmon, building a shrine on top, now known as the Minowa Shrine. I have heard that, for the repose of the deceased, Lord Yoshiie attached golden tags to numerous cranes and released them, and this is one of them. Ninety eight years have passed from the sixth year of Kōhei until the present first year of Kyūju [1154], and strangely enough today is also the tenth day of the third month. It was certainly not a misfortune that this crane with the tag attached to its leg had flown all the way to the western sea, and of all the places it had been in the world just happened to make a faulty landing on this pine branch when startled by the thunder. If I had passed by unaware, this crane would have died. Was it led here by the spirit of my great grandfather Lord Yoshiie to save me?” He explained the connection with reverence, and also with a note of joy, whereupon Kiheiji also pondered the strangeness of it all as he again took the crane in his arms and, after seeing Tametomo to his lodgings, returned to his own home.

Tametomo then took good care of the crane, putting it in a crate and giving it food and water from his own hand, so that it was completely healed after a few days. But before that, on the same day when Tametomo returned home he called the remaining wolf, Nokaze. It approached with its tail wagging, but somehow sensed something sad about Tametomo, who then told it of the death of Yamao as if he were talking to a person. Nokaze, as if unable to bear the tragic news, lowered his head and shed tears of grief. Seeing that, Shigesue’s fate seemed all the more pitiful, and that night Tametomo had a priest chant sutras for his late companion and for Yamao, performing Buddhist masses for the dead until late.

Chapter Four

An old ape ascends the pagoda and humiliates its lord,
The injured crane leaves its crate and requites a favor.

After losing Shigesue and Yamao, Tametomo was in low spirits. As he pondered both his past life and future course on a short spring night during fitful bouts of sleep, he dreamed of a woman dressed in a kimono of pure white twilled silk and a divided skirt of the same color. Her head was adorned with a branch of deep red blossoms, and as she stood in proper form next to his pillow, she said, “I have been under your solicitous care these several days, and now overjoyed that my body is again well I have come to tell you of something. Tomorrow if you take me to Higo and release me beside the shrine in Aso, you will without fail take to wife a charming and intelligent woman who will be a support to you. I shall depart from you there, but we’ll meet again in the far reaches of the south seas.” With that, he awoke. Thinking carefully about what he had seen, the figure that the woman presented and what she said about having recovered her health after receiving his care, he had no doubt that the crane he had been keeping had achieved some divine power and had brought him auspicious tidings.

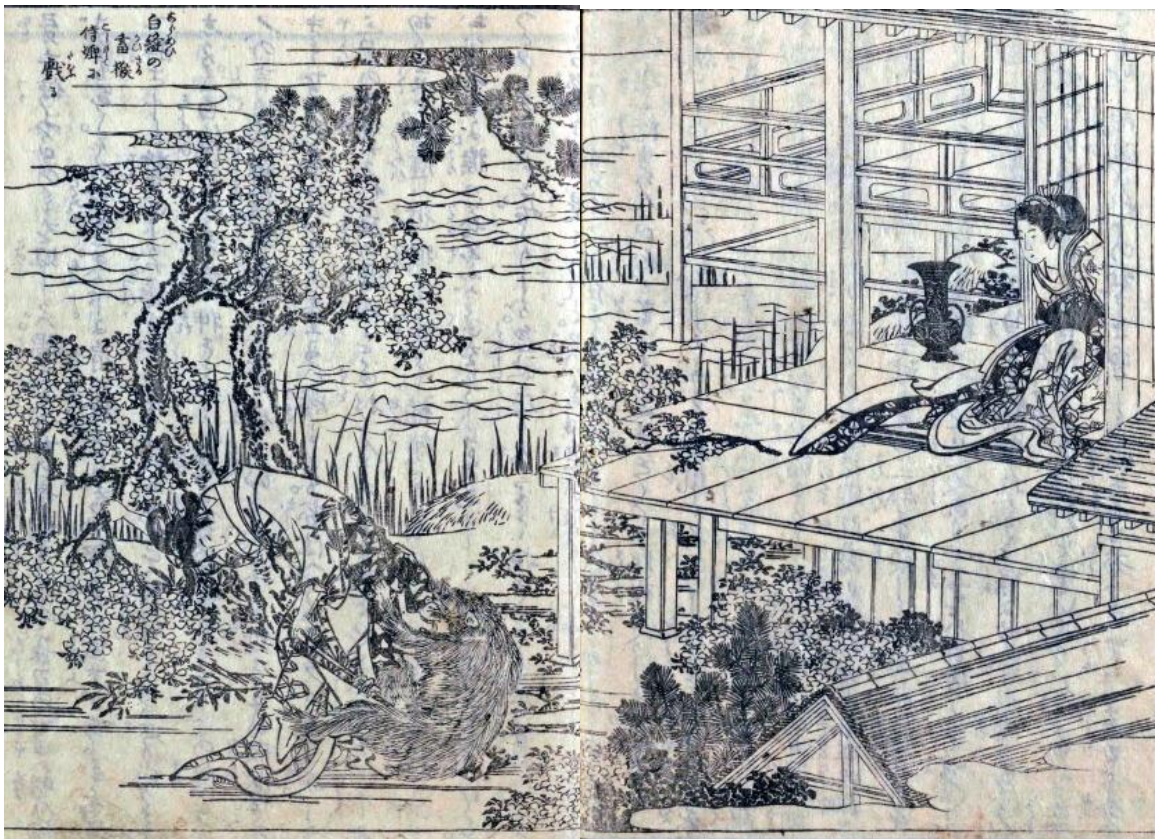
The next morning he went to the main building where his host the provisional governor Suetō had his quarters and in the course of their conversation also happened to mention, “Lately I’ve been keeping a crane that was released by my great grandfather Lord Yoshiie, and there was a golden tag attached to it. I was instructed in a revelatory dream to present it to the Aso Shrine in the province of Higo. By your leave, I must go there.” The provisional governor had for some time both detested and feared Tametomo’s wisdom and valor, and thought that if he left him in his service for a long time, he would eventually usurp control of domanial lands, and thus was secretly pleased, seeing this as good fortune. Suetō replied, “In Higo there is a warrior named Saburō Tadakuni, one of the sons of Aso no Hei Shirō Tadakage,¹ whose domanial land is expansive and whose family is very wealthy. It would be better for you to rely on them than to remain here. But even if you don’t enter their service, you should not hesitate to make an extended pilgrimage to the shrine. Go ahead and leave soon.” Tametomo was delighted at this response and entrusted Nokaze to Kiheiji’s care. Announcing his departure, he hired two of

¹ Also known as Taira no Tadakage or Ata no Tadakage, he was subjected to imperial punishment for his role in the Heiji rebellion of 1160. According to some accounts, he became father-in-law to Tametomo in 1154.

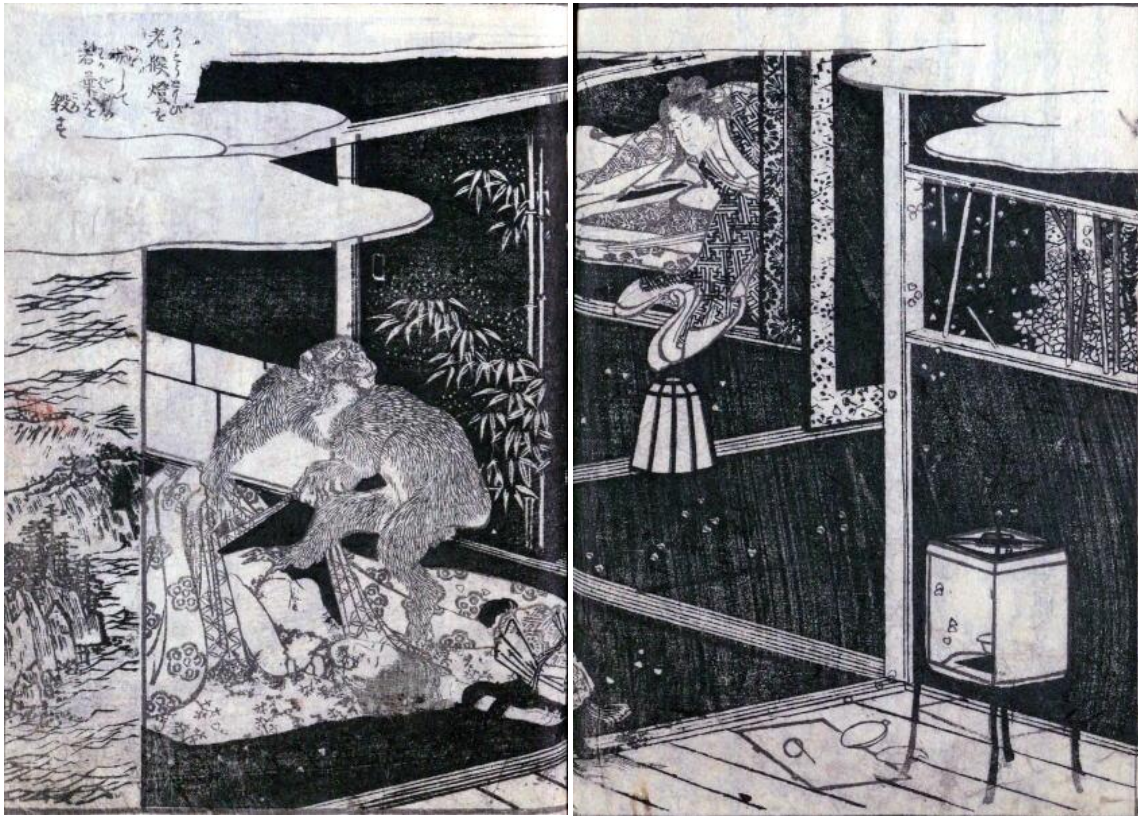
Suetō's servants to carry the crane's crate and, attired as a country warrior on a private pilgrimage, set out for Higo on the very next day.

Here the account diverges to tell of the warrior Aso no Saburō Taira no Tadakuni of the Aso district in the province of Higo. His domain consisted of the three districts of Aso, Takuma, and Kuma. He had a great number of servants, but his wife had long ago passed away, leaving him only one daughter named Shiranui, who was in her sixteenth year. She was lovely of form and refined in manners, so that men flocked from far and near seeking her hand in marriage, but Shiranui gave her consent to none of them. Her reason? While she was refined in appearance she was bold in spirit, no less than the manliest of men. She had always been most fond of crossing swords and brandishing spears, and even the young girls in her service all received training in use of the halberd. Her aspirations were in no wise less fervid than those of anyone under heaven, and she had vowed never to give herself to a man who was not a wise and valorous warrior. Since she had met no man who appealed to her she remained unmarried.

Now Shiranui had for years doted on a monkey she had tamed. This monkey understood human language and was also able to dance, but as it grew rather large, was now about the same size as an eight- or nine-year-old child. It was toward the end of the third month and one of the

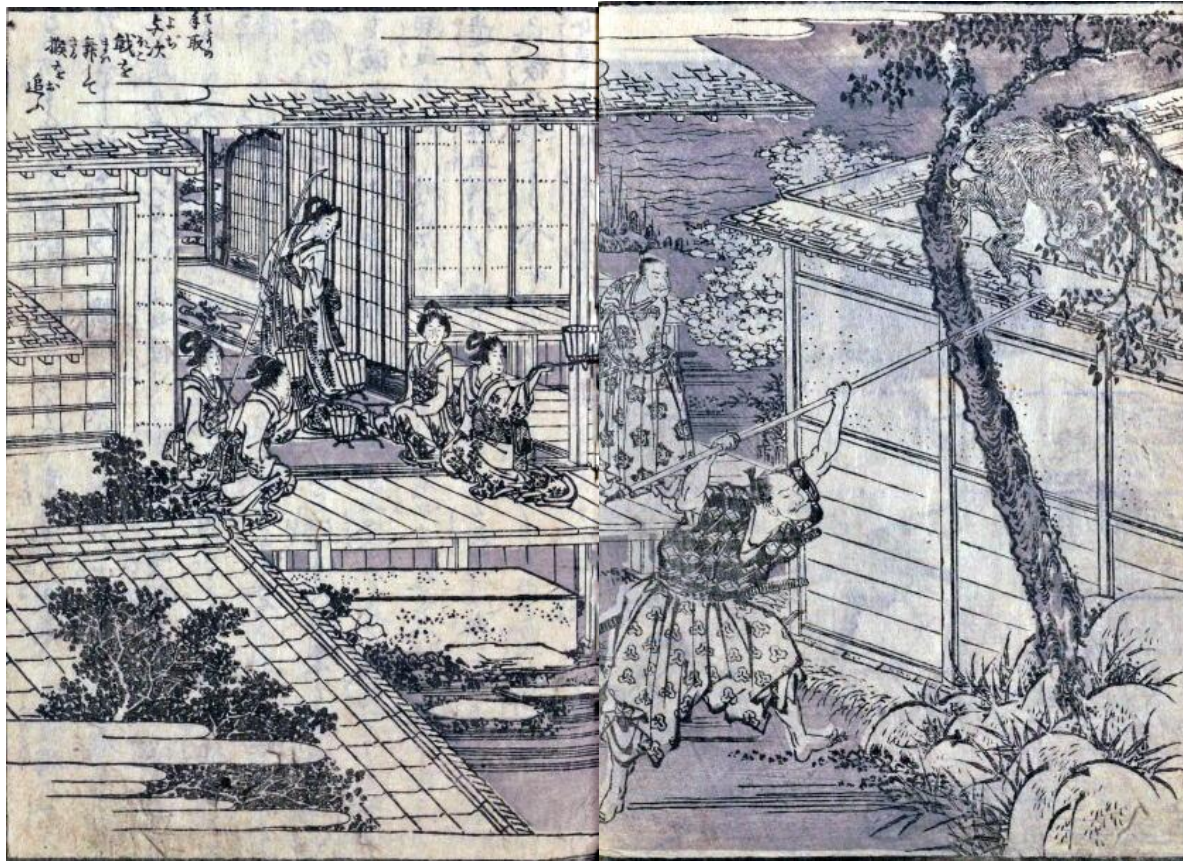


servant girls named Wakaba was standing in the garden beneath a late-blooming cherry tree in order to break off branches when Shiranui came out onto the veranda with her monkey. She pointed to this or that branch, whereupon the monkey stared at Wakaba's legs that were exposed when she reached upward raising the hem of her skirt. It then rushed down and embraced her legs, eliciting a cry of alarm as Wakaba ran away. Unabashed, the monkey ran after her, clinging to her in a lewd manner. Infuriated, Shiranui had hardly finished saying "Will you, a beast, humiliate a person..." when she unsheathed the halberd hanging in the lintel and was about to cut the animal down. Alarmed, the monkey ran toward an artificial hill in the garden with Shiranui in pursuit until they came to a stand of trees blocking her way, so that she lost sight of the creature. "If it comes back, tie it up securely." As she waited for news of it, it grew dark, and since it did not return, she assumed that it must have escaped to the mountains and gave up her



pursuit. That evening it was Wakaba's turn to attend her lady's chamber, and as she lay down close to Shiranui's pillow on that short spring night, she dozed off before she knew it. It was already deep in the night, about the hour of the ox [3:00 a.m.], when there was a faint sound followed by a cry from Wakaba. Startled awake, Shiranui lifted her head and looked, but their

lamps had been extinguished and she could not make out what the matter was. After calling



several times “Someone, come quickly,” an elderly woman in the next room was awakened and answered in a sleepy voice as she arose, but there was no light in her room either, so in a state of confusion she groped about searching. But the lamps in every room had been put out and the commotion only increased. When they were finally able to light a candle and came running, they found the servant girl Wakaba dead and bloodied, her throat cut open. Next to her were bloody footprints, quite unlike human ones. Everyone was alarmed and suspicious, and Shiranui speculated aloud, “Looking closely at these footprints, I can tell they are unmistakably those of an ape. Out of spite for having been driven away it crept back stealthily and extinguished the lamps in every room in order all the easier to kill Wakaba and flee.” Then her words turned into a command, “Follow the trail of blood!”

The elderly woman responded, inspecting the hallway to find fresh blood on the sliding door and on a place where the latticework had been broken through. There the trail of blood stopped. Shiranui cursed that the monkey had both broken in and escaped from that place, and at her voice her serving women came running, creating a commotion as they set out in search,

daggers in hand, but they found nothing. Then her father Tadakuni came rushing in. Beside herself with rage, she told him everything beginning with the ape's lewd actions toward Wakaba. Tadakuni was furious upon hearing this. "That's outrageous! Call retainers who know how to handle this!" At that, one of the serving girls ran and conveyed the command, whereupon Tedorino Yoji, Tedorino Yosaburō, Ōya no Shinzaburō, Koshiya no Genta, Matsura no Jirō, Yoshida Hyōe, Uchide no Kihachi, Takama no Saburō, and Takama no Shirō² among other valorous retainers all rushed in through the courtyard gate. Tadakuni approached them, explaining the situation and raging, "Even if you have to cut down trees and mow grass, catch that ape and kill it!" Answering "Yes sir" in unison, the split up and went their several ways, noiselessly waving torches as they searched every corner of the mansion. Near the western gate something was at that moment escaping over the earthen wall. Espying it in the moonlight, Tedorino Yoji attempted to cut it down with a short halberd when it jumped onto a pine branch and, climbing from tree to tree, leaped down outside the wall. They shouted, "That ape made it over the wall! Go after it!" The gate was pushed open and everyone surged out.

In a remote area on Mount Aso there was an ancient temple known as Monjuin. (This temple is no longer there. In Kumamoto province there is a temple with the same name. This needs further research.) It was founded by Kōbō Daishi³ and features a large hall. The above-mentioned party pursued the monkey to the gate of this temple and thought it would be an easy capture when unexpectedly the beast jumped over the wall and climbed up to the ornament atop the pagoda. There was a fury of shouting, "Now we've determined where it's gone. Let's hurry and get inside!" They pounded frantically on the door of the gate, "We're retainers of Aso no Tadakuni, here on a matter we'll tell you about. Open the gate!" The elderly gatekeeper answered "yes" but did not immediately open. After some noises from within, the gate was finally opened and the men entered, but the position of the monkey left no way for capture, and all they could do was to keep a thankless watch on the pagoda and wait for daybreak.

The eastern sky brightened and cawing crows left the forest, then the mountain peaks took on a purple hue as the spring sun began to peep over the horizon. It was then that Tadakuni arrived on a swift horse ahead of numerous soldiers. Seeing the situation he shouted with irritation, "Shoot it down!" But the five-story pagoda was on top of a high hill, and the gnarled

² These names all appear in *Sankō Hōgen monogatari* in a list of Tameyoshi's retainers.

³ Also known as Kūkai, 774-835.

branches of the pines in front of it were full of mists. The trees were extremely tall, meeting the clouds. Even Yang Youji or Li Keyong⁴ would have been unable to hit such a mark. If one of the men shot and missed, it would not only demean himself but would humiliate his lord as well, and so no one came forth to volunteer. The monkey, viewing them from far above and slapping its rump pointed toward them, pretended to be excreting on them, its actions so abusive that Tadakuni gnashed his teeth in rage. “Is this not a simple matter? Our family has taken its place among distinguished warriors for generations, and though I am unworthy of such lineage, I’ve never given cause to be looked down on. And yet now I’m humiliated by this beast. Unless and until it is immediately killed and its flesh flayed, I shall not return home.” But in spite of his cursing and raging, no strategy came immediately to mind. Unable to contain his anger, he called for Uchide no Kihachi and gave an order, “Write these words down and post it on the gate pillar of the temple.” Kihachi took some paper out of his breast pocket along with a portable ink and brush case and wrote: “I will give my beloved daughter Shiranui in marriage to anyone who is able to shoot down the monkey on top of the pagoda of Monjuin. The third month of the first year of Kyūju [1154]. Aso no Saburō Tadakuni.” This was then posted by the gate. Villagers read it and word spread until people from far and wide had gathered at the gate, clamoring and cursing but not amounting to anything of use.

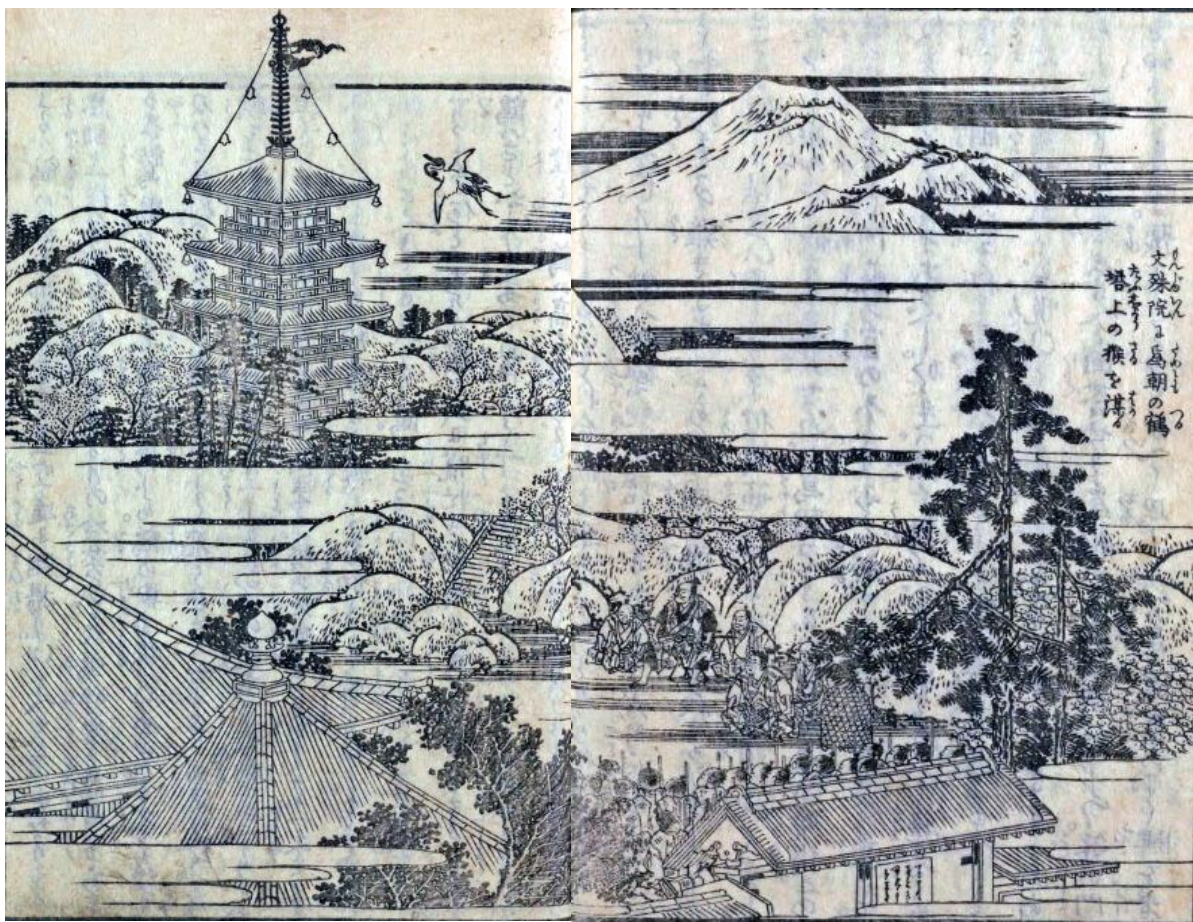
Just then, Hachirō Tametomo arrived in the province in order to make a pilgrimage at the Aso Shrine, accompanied by servants carrying the crane’s crate. As he passed by Monjuin and saw the crowd gathered there, he read what was posted at the gate and realized that this was what was portended by his dream, that he would take a beautiful woman to wife. He entered through the gate and, facing Tadakuni, said, “By your leave, I’ll shoot down that monkey.” Hearing this, Tadakuni took a good look at him. He appeared to be about sixteen or seventeen, was brawny of build, fair of complexion with a prominent nose, brows of bluish hue like a lush mountain, lips as red as springtime blossoms, ears thick, and eyes with double pupils. With a stature of seven feet, he was obviously no ordinary person.

Struck with admiration, Tadakuni said, “If you are able to bring down that ape, I’ll have no reservations about making you my son-in-law.” “In that case, I’ll show you what I can do with a bow.” Then Tametomo had his servant bring his bow and, taking it up, walked toward the hill. Seeing how he bent the iron bow, Tadakuni and all the others were greatly amazed. “We’ve

⁴ Yang Youji, see ch. 1 n 30; Li Keyong (856-908), a military general noted for his skill in archery.

never heard of anyone in the past who was able to pull a bow with such a heavy draw, let alone expecting something like that in the future.” He seemed very promising indeed. The monkey saw Tametomo from afar and, wanting to escape, shed tears of distress. Word of this state of affairs reached the chief priest of the temple, who sent a sexton to Tadakuni, saying, “Our temple was founded by Kōbō Daishi at the request of Emperor Ninmyō.⁵ In that pagoda are enshrined by imperial command relics of Shakyamuni, and to shoot an arrow toward it would make you an enemy of the realm and of the Buddha. Even if that ape has committed a crime, once it enters these precincts it has sanctuary, and the priest could not bear for it simply to be killed here. All things considered, the matter should be handled with lenience.”

Tadakuni knitted his brows. Even though that creature has retreated to a hallowed place, it has already killed a person, and cannot be forgiven. And yet, to shoot an arrow toward a sacred pagoda wherein holy relics have been enshrined by imperial command might be to invite



⁵ 808-850; r. 833-850.

disaster later. While Tadakuni was thus agonizing over what to do, Tametomo quickly retreated to his original position, whereupon the monkey again began to make obscene gestures, even more humiliating than the ones before, so that Tadakuni's rage increased. Tametomo lost all hope, thinking how easy it would be for him to bring the beast down, but there was no way for him to do it. If Half-mile Stone-throwing Kiheiji were there, he would have no trouble bringing it down without bow and arrow, but he was in a far away province. As he was wracking his mind thinking of various possibilities, the crane suddenly flapped its wings inside its crate as if it wanted to fly out. Seeing that, it suddenly dawned on Tametomo: the announcement by the crane in that dream that he should release it by the Aso Shrine was meant for that very day. Not allowing for serious doubt, he addressed Tadakuni boldly, "By your leave, I shall bring the ape down without bow and arrow." Tadakuni was extremely pleased. "If you are able to do so, I could not be more delighted. Make preparations immediately."

With a prayer in his heart, Tametomo opened the door of the crate, whereupon the crane emerged—the tag still attached to its leg—and soared high into the sky, soon flying out of sight. Tadakuni and his retinue laughed in scorn upon seeing this, and whispered to each other, "What a fool! Eagles and mountain hawks might capture monkeys, but whoever heard of a crane taking a beast? And yet he let it go with an indifferent look on his face." Seeing this situation, doubt sprang up in Tametomo's mind. But after gazing at the sky for some time, he saw the crane circling back from the west until it was about ten feet away from the top of the pagoda. As the crane hovered about, the monkey looked up at it without blinking and seemed as if it might catch it when it approached. But the crane, alternately flying up then swooping down, gradually shortened the distance until the monkey made a flurried attempt to climb down from the topmost ornament. Just then, the crane plunged down instantaneously and stabbed the ape with its beak. At once covered with its own blood, the beast fell with a thud while the crane flew up and disappeared into the southern sky.

All who saw this raised their voices in wonder and acclamation. Tadakuni was overjoyed and, inspecting the monkey together with Tametomo, saw that it had been pierced from its back through its chest, and that there was a great deal of sand in its eyes and nose. Tadakuni clapped his hands as it suddenly occurred to him, "The reason that the crane initially flew away was to get sand in its beak to blind the beast. Though a bird, when confronting adversity it can vanquish even a powerful enemy. Its wisdom is inestimable. Ah, what a marvel!" Following this fulsome

praise, he turned to Tametomo and spoke courteously, “Whoever you may be, you have handily destroyed my enemy. If you are not a visitor from the realm of wizardry, then you are surely a famous warrior. Your feat today was truly out of the ordinary.” Tametomo smiled. “I feel foolish identifying myself, having been long disowned by my father Tameyoshi and now living as a dependent in Bungo. My name is Hachirō Tametomo. There is much I could tell about that crane, but one day would not suffice for that. Fortunately I was able to fulfil your demand, and for that I am very happy.” Tadakuni was both astonished and delighted to hear that. “This is indeed a pleasant surprise, that you are a young master from the Minamotos! Your features and your physique did not appear to be those of an ordinary man, and it turns out that my assumptions were correct. Though I can claim no particular talent, I am numbered among those who take up bow and arrow. If it is not disagreeable to you, I should like to offer my daughter Shiranui and conclude a permanent and felicitous union like that between Jin and Qin.⁶ Would you consent to this?” Tametomo replied, “Such is my greatest wish. Now that I am estranged from my family and have no one upon whom to rely, I would be grateful if you do as seems best.” All the retainers of the Aso household were jubilant, shouting “Banzai!”

Thus Tadakuni, along with Tametomo, led the soldiers back to the mansion. The chief priest, a sage, grieved over the death of the monkey in spite of its crimes, and lamented his inability to save the creature that had fled to his temple. He buried its remains outside the temple gate, and someone with a taste for curiosities erected a gravestone over it. It is known as the Monkey Barrow.

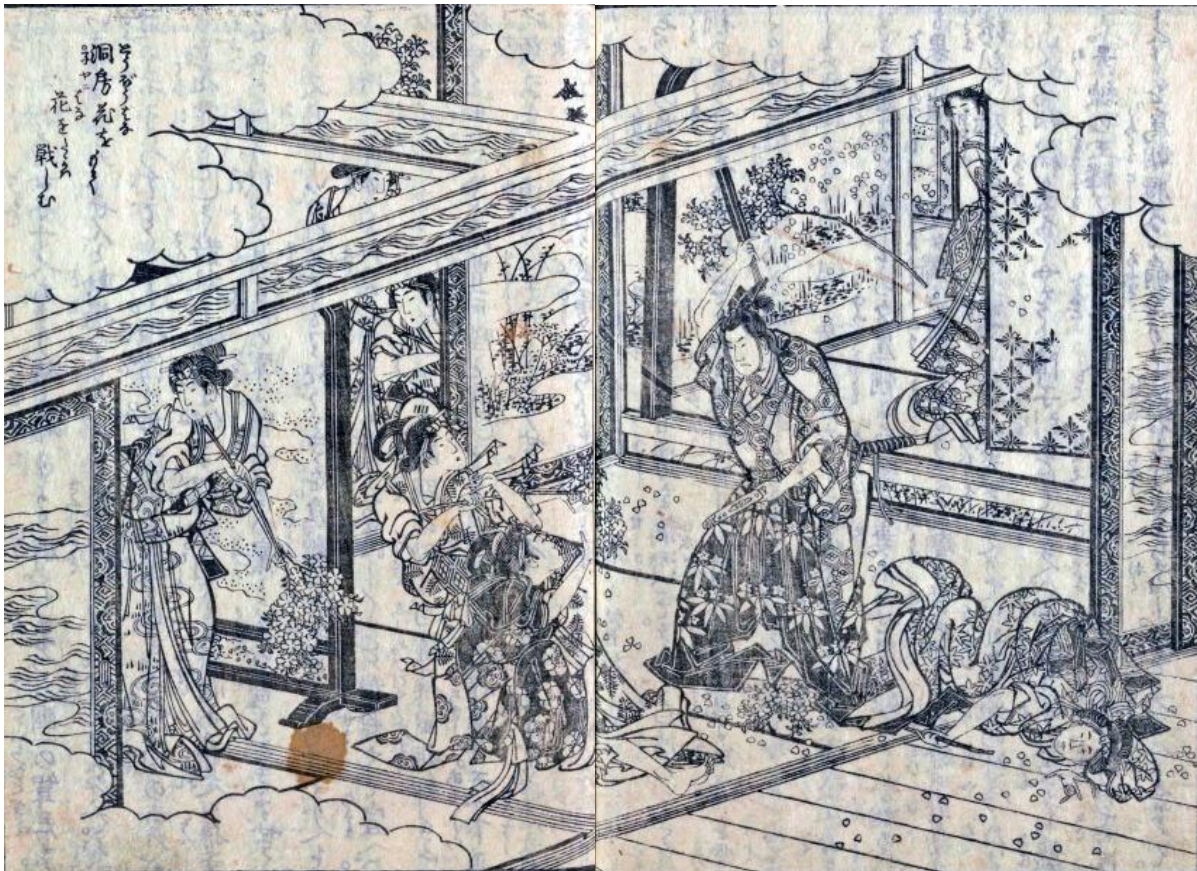
⁶ The union through marriage of the states of Jin and Qin is mentioned in *The Romance of the Three Kingdoms*, and is often cited as emblematic of conjugal bliss.

Chapter Five

Shiranui marshals elegant female warriors,
Tametomo bravely subdues Kyushu.

On that day Aso no Saburō Tadakuni returned with Tametomo and entertained him lavishly. He also related the day's events to his daughter Shiranui, praising Tametomo's wisdom and bravery. Though unfamiliar with his character and not immediately accepting all that she heard, since she was obliged for his removal of her father's disgrace, she felt that it would be unfilial for her to disregard his promise to Tametomo, and gave her consent. Tadakuni was delighted and, selecting an auspicious day, arranged a congratulatory banquet, seeing to the finest wine and delicacies in a most elegant setting. That evening, Tametomo and Shiranui were united in matrimony.

After the ceremony, an elderly woman carrying a candle led Tametomo to Shiranui's bedchamber. When they reached the end of the roofed corridor the old woman turned to him and said, "This is milady's bedchamber." Tametomo casually but gently opened the sliding door and



entered, whereupon two women in layered kimonos of white and red with sleeve cords of soft silk immediately came forth shouting and attempting to beat Tametomo with branches of cherry blossoms. Using the fan in his sash, Tametomo adroitly brought them down, both left and right, and when he was about to proceed inside, ten or so more women in the same attire swarmed toward him from both sides, shouting in chorus, “Best wishes for the finest bridegroom in the three lands!”¹ When they attempted to beat him with ponderous branches of blossoms, he pushed his way through as if they were mere threads of gossamer, shoving or brushing them aside. And as if a wind were created by his fan, the blossoms scattered in a flurry, and with the ornamental hairpins of the women looking like flitting butterflies it was a most elegant scene. He was like Sun Zi training a company of women warriors,² they were like the floral battle of Taizhen.³ Mixed with the fragrance of the incense suffused in their clothing and flitting about, it was difficult to tell woman from blossom, but Tametomo remained composed and would not allow them to come near him, striking down every branch from their hands, saying “This is an outrage!” Surprised and at a loss, they all crouched down. At that moment, Shiranui emerged silently from behind a screen and said apologetically and without a trace of malice, “I say, young master, please do not think this suspicious. From my girlhood though I had resolved not to yield to marriage to any man who was not a peerless specimen of wise and valorous manhood, I have been brought up in a sequestered environment and was still ignorant of the kind of gallantry you show. It was not that I doubted it, but I planned this little game. It was indiscreet of me, but please do not think ill of it.” Looking behind himself, Tametomo said laughing, “I don’t think anyone in the world could manage to beat me, even someone who could roll the stone of a thousand pulls,⁴ not to mention the tactics of women.” The women then all stood up and courteously led him to the bedchamber.

Thus, since they seemed to be a loving couple vowing to grow old together, Tadakuni was extremely pleased and treated his son-in-law more cordially than ever. Tametomo’s martial

¹ That is, Japan, China, and India.

² In a likely apocryphal account retold by Sima Qian (145-86 BCE), the famous tactician Sun Zi (155-496 BCE) was asked by He Lu, King of Wu, to see if he could train the palace concubines as soldiers. When the favored concubine was executed for insubordination, the king realized that Sun Zi took his commission seriously, and engaged his services.

³ Better known as Yang Guifei (719-745), consort to Emperor Xuanzang (685-762; r. 712-756) of the Tang dynasty. Taizhen was the name given to her when she was a Taoist nun. In one account, at a banquet she divided her women into two groups and had them battle each other with flowers.

⁴ The name of the boulder Izanagi used to block the entrance to Hades after his escape. See *Kojiki*, ch. 10.

prestige gradually rose like the morning sun, and as a result, warriors in neighboring provinces all desired to come under his leadership, some forming association with him. Others, however, envying his wisdom and valor, kept their distance from him. The provisional governor Suetō, hearing that Tametomo had become Aso no Tadakuni's son-in-law and that warriors in other provinces were flocking to him, was greatly surprised and sent messengers to him with gifts of swords and horses, along with an apology for his inhospitable treatment. At the same time, accompanied by Nokaze and his wife, Yatsushiro, Half-mile Stone-throwing Kiheiji came from Bungo. Tametomo was delighted to see him and received him warmly. Thinking that now was the time to strike those who did not yet follow him and unite Kyushu under one rule, he had begun making preparations for battle. Now the comrades of the Kikuchi and Harada clans⁵ had assembled a great number of soldiers, and when he heard that they were advancing, no sooner had he said "Whoever advances first has control over men. In that case, launch a counterattack and break through their ranks" than he immediately assembled a small force and, with Aso no Tadakuni as guide, advanced on their castles and in one battle brought them to submission. With this as a beginning of his campaign he was able to take more than ten fortifications and, in more than twenty engagements, did not retreat even once. Of course it owed to Tametomo's mastery of archery and strategy, but also among the most valiant of his soldiers there was Kiheiji's skill with throwing and Tedorino Yoji's power in grappling, such that even multitudes could not stand up to them. And that was not all; when they attacked the enemy forces by night, the wolf Nokaze would first steal into their encampment and kill their night watchmen, and then lead its master in. Thus, in only one year Tametomo had annexed all nine provinces of Kyushu, establishing his fortress in Dazaifu in Chikuzen province, becoming the chief magistrate in charge of rewards and punishments. He reduced requirements for tribute and instituted benevolent administration, and so he won the approbation of the people and was called Chinzei Hachirō.⁶

Now lay monk Junior Shōnagon Shinzei harbored a deep hatred toward Tametomo, and even after the latter had gone to Bungo sent men to spy on the state of affairs there, recently obtaining through collusion with the priest at the Kashii Shrine much detailed information. Just as he was hoping for the right occasion to act, in the spring of Kyūju 2 [1152] as they were digging the moat for a pond at Cloistered Emperor Toba's imperial villa in Jōbodaiin, Shinzei

⁵ According to *Sankō Hōgen monogatari*, Kikuchi and Harada were powerful families in Kyushu at the time.

⁶ Chinzei 鎮西 is another name for Kyushu.

was delighted, thinking that it would be perfect timing. He stealthily suggested to the cloistered emperor, “What they say is true, that Tameyoshi’s eighth son Tametomo, captured a most marvelous crane. It had been released long ago by Yoshiie, and had a golden tag attached to it. It is larger than a stork and has a very loud cry. Your majesty should command Tameyoshi to bring that crane back. It would be so lovely if it were released by the pond.” The cloistered emperor agreed, and the next day called Tameyoshi and commanded him to present the crane. Quite perplexed, Tameyoshi answered, “Due to certain circumstances, Tametomo was banished to the western provinces and for years now there has been no correspondence between us. I had not heard of this incident with the crane, but I shall make inquiries and inform your majesty. I shall send someone immediately.”

That very day he at once sent his able retainer, Hada no Jirō Kagenobu to Dazaifu, ordering him to bring the crane back. Taking little with him, Hada no Jirō rode a swift horse day and night, arriving at Dazaifu in few days. Announcing himself, “Kagenobu here with a command from my lord,” he was admitted to Tametomo’s presence. “Well, if it isn’t Kagenobu! What matter of business brings you here? Is my father well? Is this perchance a message that he has rescinded his disowning of me?” Kagenobu replied, “You should be relieved to know that our lord and your brothers are all in good health. What I have so suddenly been sent here to tell you is as follows.” Leaving nothing out, he then proceeded to relate the cloistered emperor’s request for the crane. Greatly surprised, Tametomo said, “I released that crane under such and such circumstances late last spring, and by now it has gone far away. If he had made the command before then, I would gladly have complied, but now that this much time has passed since its release, there is nothing that can be done about it. I’m not sure what to say.” Deeply disappointed, Hada no Jirō was also silent. After some time, Tametomo spoke up. “I can guess what happened. This is Shinzei’s plotting. His hatred for me is so strong that, though hearing that I had released the crane, I think he just feigned ignorance and told his majesty that I had only recently caught it. Thus, even if I were to say that I had released it, his majesty would not believe me. And if I were to send a different crane, that would amount to deceiving both his majesty and my father. The only thing we can do is tell the truth and leave it up to fate.” With that, he sent Hada no Jirō back to the capital accompanied by Half-mile Stone-throwing Kiheiji.

Thus, Kagenobu and Kiheiji made great haste, returning in but a few days. They met directly with Lord Tameyoshi, and Kagenobu first of all presented to him the letter from

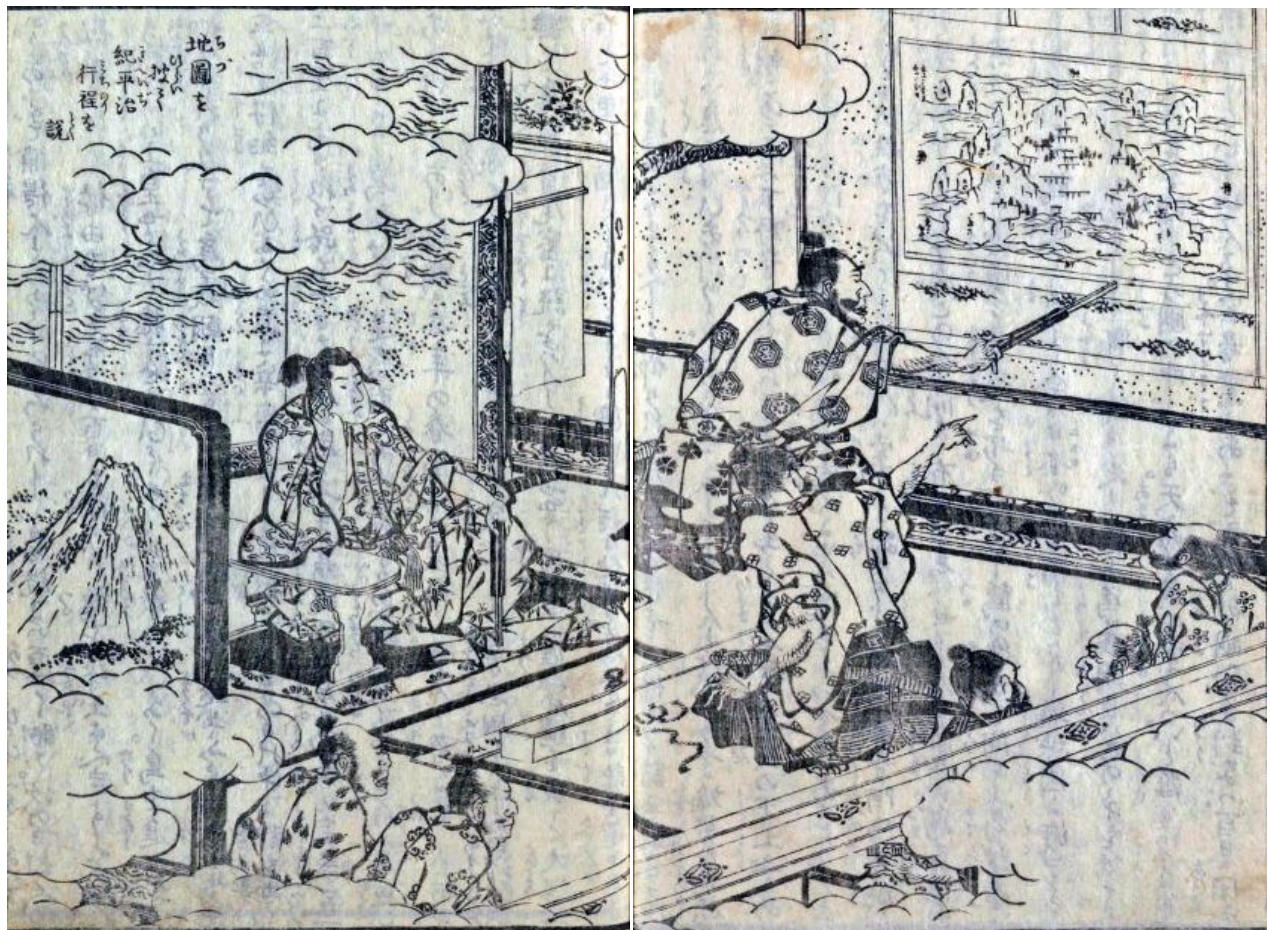
Tametomo, and Kiheiji explained in detail what Tametomo had written. Upon hearing of these circumstances, Lord Tameyoshi was deeply saddened. Since it was not a matter of Tametomo being greedy or disregarding his father's misfortune, what he had heard was certainly not a fabrication. And yet, there were slanderers at every point along the way, and there was no telling what kind of censure he might face. But what could be done about the crane that had been released? All he could do is relate what Tametomo had said, and having thus decided, he went to the cloistered emperor's palace and declared, "In spring of last year Tametomo released the crane he had caught, and now there is nothing that can be done about it. I am sorry about this trouble." The Cloistered Emperor's countenance seemed to darken. "I hear that Tametomo has recently asserted military power in Dazaifu. It must be untrue that he released the crane; he is simply unwilling to give it up. That is tantamount to disobeying an imperial command. Unless he immediately surrenders the bird, his father Tameyoshi will be relieved of his office and return to his former post as police chief."

With dread and trepidation, Tameyoshi retreated to his mansion on the sixth avenue and, assembling his many sons, counseled with them about what should be done. His heir Yoshitomo,⁷ Captain of the Left Division of Bureau of Horses but now Governor of Shimotsuke, came forward and said, "There is no land under Heaven that is not his majesty's. If it is an imperial command to seek out that crane, there must be a way to capture it. But unless we can determine where it went, we don't know where to look for it. The governor of Harima, Abe no Yasunari, is a master of divination. Let us go and ask him of its whereabouts." Tameyoshi approved of this and, immediately summoning Yasunari, inquired where the released crane had gone. After thinking for some time, Yasunari said, "This crane has gone far away, and is beyond the land of Yamato. If you go to the Kingdom of Ryukyu and look for it, you will easily be able to find it within a hundred days." Upon hearing this, Lord Tameyoshi felt even more distressed. Looking for a bird that flies freely in the sky is very difficult even within this county, but taking the mission to far-away Ryukyu would be no easy task. And yet, he was pleased to know that if he could only make it to that country, within a hundred days he would be sure to capture the bird. Rewarding Yasunari handsomely, with the document recording the divination in hand the very next day he reported to the Cloistered Emperor the circumstances, requesting leave of a hundred

⁷ 1123-1160.

days to search for the crane. Having listened to the request, his majesty ordered, “In that case, present the bird within that number of days.”

Tameyoshi left the palace feeling somewhat relieved. He explained the details to Kagenobu and Kiheiji, who left the capital that very day, making the two-hundred league journey to Dazaifu in seven days, and reported the full particulars of Yasunari’s divination and Tameyoshi’s statement. A look of annoyance appeared on Tametomo’s face upon hearing this, but at once said, “Something now comes to mind. In the dream I had last spring, the announcement that I would meet this crane in the far ends of the south seas must refer to this. First, I must hear what everyone has to say about it and then make a decision.” Calling together his father-in-law Tadakuni and numerous retainers, he explained the matter in detail from beginning to end. “How could we cross three hundred and seventy leagues of ocean from the inlet of Satsuma, especially since we have no knowledge of the geography and do not understand the language? And even if the crane is in that country, it is not at all certain that we could find it within a hundred days. I’d like to hear everyone’s ideas about strategy.”



At that point, Half-mile Stone-throwing Kiheiji spoke up, “Since my grandfather was from the Kingdom of Ryukyu, my father had direct knowledge of that land and always talked about it. Let me give you a general idea. The name ‘Ryukyu’ was anciently written with characters meaning ‘horned dragon.’⁸ The land is bounded by many rolling waves, appearing as if young dragons are arising in the water, and that’s where it gets its name. According to another theory, The founder of the country cut open a young dragon and retrieved two gems, and thus it is so named. Its people have deep-set eyes and prominent noses, very much like women.⁹ The men shave their beards and the women use ink to tattoo beauty marks on their faces. Their capital city is called Naha, and the palace is named Hōshinden, which has gates known as Rōkokumon and Chūsanhaibō. The mountain in the northwest is called Mount Ya. To the East are the temples Tenkaitōji and Engakutōji. The Kyōon Pavilion is north of Pinnacle Island. Angel Mansion is five leagues from there, with another thirty leagues to the Kankaimon gate of the palace. To the south there is another island whose mountain is called Mount Taihei. Both to the north and the south are yet other islands collectively known as ‘Little Ryukyu.’ In the ocean to the south there are four mountains: Mount Ryūō, Mount Netsuhecki, Shisan’ō, and Mount Suizan. To the northwest are three more islands: Gendasho, Kōeisho, and Hōkotō. To the west are three islands: Mount Bashi, Mount Kobei, and Mount Hōka. There are two more mountains: Chōgyosho and Mount Heika. The king is referred to as *chūzan*, and the crown prince as *nakakusuku*, while the queen is called *chūfugimi*. The princes are known as *wanshi*, the warriors as *haikin*, and those they command as *tsukutō*. There are also various names for officials and chieftains. All handsome youth are called *satonoshi*,¹⁰ and sons of commoners go by such names as Tarōgane and Jirōgane. Those words have some resemblance to ours and are yet different. ‘Sun’ is *odeta*, while ‘moon’ is *otsukikanashi*. ‘Buddha’ is *hotokekanashi*, ‘god’ is *kamekanashi*, ‘water’ is *ohei*, ‘fire’ is *omatsu*, ‘saké’ is *osake*, ‘food’ is *meshi*, ‘man’ is *okega*, ‘woman’ is *oinago*, ‘father’ is *shōmai*, ‘mother’ is *anmā*, ‘older brother’ is *suigi*, ‘younger brother’ is *ottō*, ‘sword’ is *hōchō*, and ‘clothing’ is *ibuku*. Others are too numerous to list. Japan lies to the northeast of this country, while to the southwest is Meihua in Fujian province, which they say is

⁸ Bakin apparently got this information from *Wakan sansai zue*, which claims that “Ryūkyū” 琉球 was originally written with the characters 流虬, or “flowing young dragons.”

⁹ These descriptions of the people are taken almost verbatim from *Wakan sansai zue*.

¹⁰ *Satonoshi*, a corruption of *satonushi*, who in the Ryukyu Kingdom served as page boys to aristocrats.

a seven-day distance by boat. Anciently, when Empress Jingū¹¹ embarked on a campaign to subdue the three Korean kingdoms,¹² in trepidation the kingdom of Ryukyu offered her an abundance of tribute. Since that time, the people of that land have come to our Shiraishi iō island,¹³ and inhabitants of that island have gone to that country to conduct trade. Now that practice has been abandoned, but they say that inhabitants of the twelve islands¹⁴ sometimes still cross the sea to that land. My lord, if you make a journey to Ryukyu, I shall act as your guide.”



Tametomo was greatly pleased at his eloquent and detailed speech, and said, “I had forgotten about you. It will be an easy matter, then, to reach that land. However, if I go there with a large retinue, the people of that land might be suspicious and reject us. So I’ll be accompanied only by Kiheiji, and we’ll go in the guise of merchants from Okinoko island, from which we’ll board available transport. Then we’ll seek out that crane. But we must take a lot of goods with us.” He

¹¹ 169-269, consort to Emperor Chūai (149-200, r. 192-200). Bakin glosses her name as “Jinkō.”

¹² Goguryeo, Baekje, and Silla. Her military campaign is described in the ninety-fourth chapter of the *Kojiki*. It is noted that no Korean or Chinese accounts corroborate the historicity of this campaign.

¹³ Now known as Kikaigashima, or Iōjima, part of Kagoshima prefecture.

¹⁴ A group of islands off the southern tip of Satsuma, or Kagoshima prefecture, including Iōjima.

then packed bolts of both regular and glossed silk as well as Takase cotton fabric, and put the gem he had previously obtained in the breast of his robe. Having finished all preparations, he sent Kagenobu back to the capital and that very evening embarked with Kiheiji in a boat bound for Okinoko island, from which they would set out for Ryukyu. Aso no Tadakuni and many of his retainers secretly saw them off.

Chapter Six

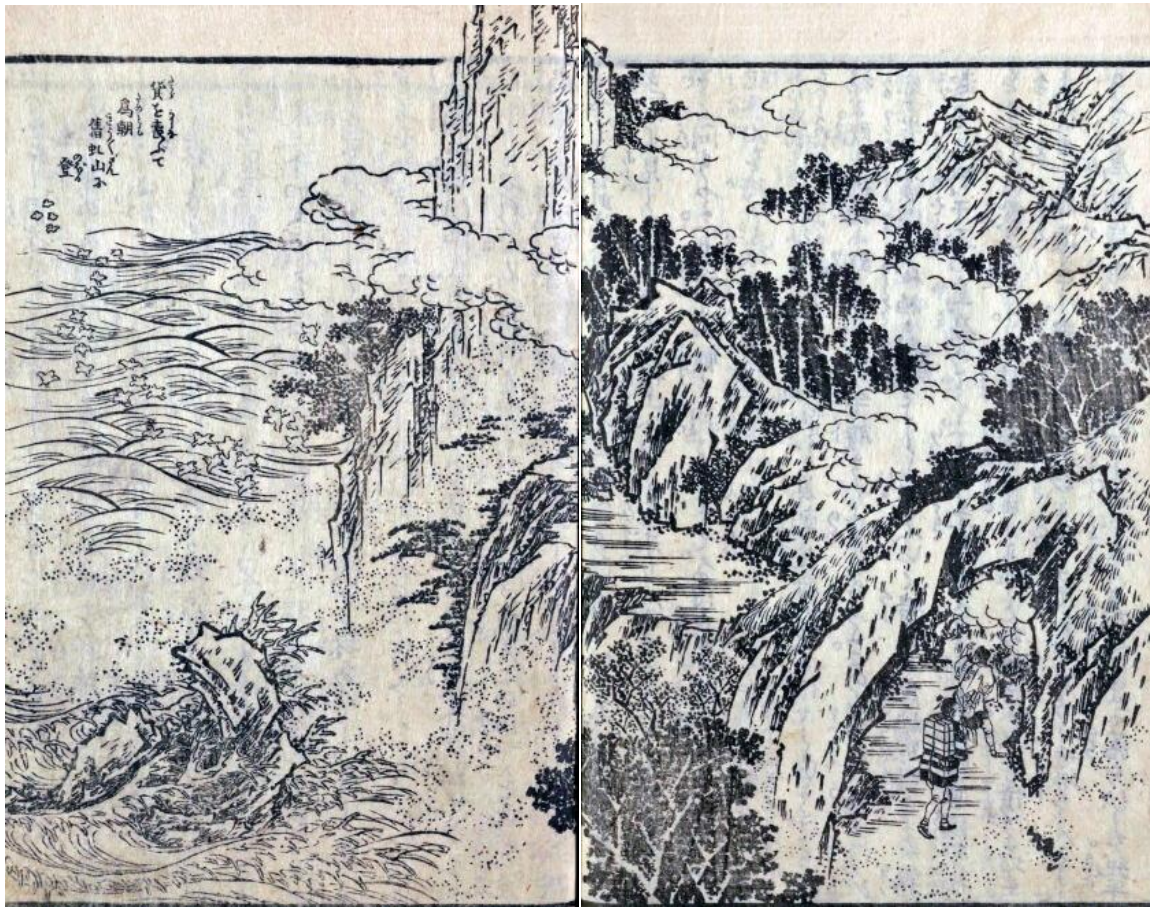
Kiheiji proposes a plan and explains geography,

Princess Nei gives yams and tells of her pain and resentment.

On the way, Tametomo gave up on asking Kiheiji about the language of that land. Setting out from Okinoko island in the inlet of Satsuma, they hoisted the main sails in fair winds and crossed over to Ryukyu in only a few days. Together with a group of Japanese merchants they took their rest at an inn, but when it came to the whereabouts of the crane, no one could answer their inquiries. Having spent so much time in vain, they felt very anxious, wondering if the trip had been worth making. Then one morning Tametomo and Kiheiji awoke to find that the bolts of fabric they had brought were missing. Greatly alarmed, they thought it must be the work of thieves and wondered where they might have entered, but after looking around, they were unable to find a place where anyone might have gotten in. The matter was so suspicious that they called for the innkeeper who, after hearing of the situation, said, “To the southwest from here among many peaks lies Old Dragon Mountain, between Mount Flower Vase and Mount Chicken Cage. A wizard named Master Mōun lives there. This sorcerer often advises people about good or bad fortune, and the effects are immediately apparent. The king therefore holds him in very high esteem. When this Master Mōun desires something, he does not hesitate to use wizardry to take it, and if those from whom it is taken fast and perform ablutions, ascend his mountain and kowtow to him, he will sometimes return the contraband. Even if he refuses to return it, since the king has such high regard for him, an appeal to the throne will not succeed. Even if those who have lost a lot are resigned to it, if they harbor even the slightest resentment they will find themselves under an evil spell. I believe that the loss of your goods must be one of the tricks of Master Mōun. If you want them back, you should head for Old Dragon Mountain right away.” Tametomo was filled with indignation upon hearing this, but he did not let it show. “In that case I’ll go to that mountain and make an entreaty. How far is it from here?” “You could reach it easily in one day,” the innkeeper replied, describing the route in detail. Accompanied by Kiheiji, Tametomo left the inn and set out for Old Dragon Mountain. (Tametomo’s conversations with the

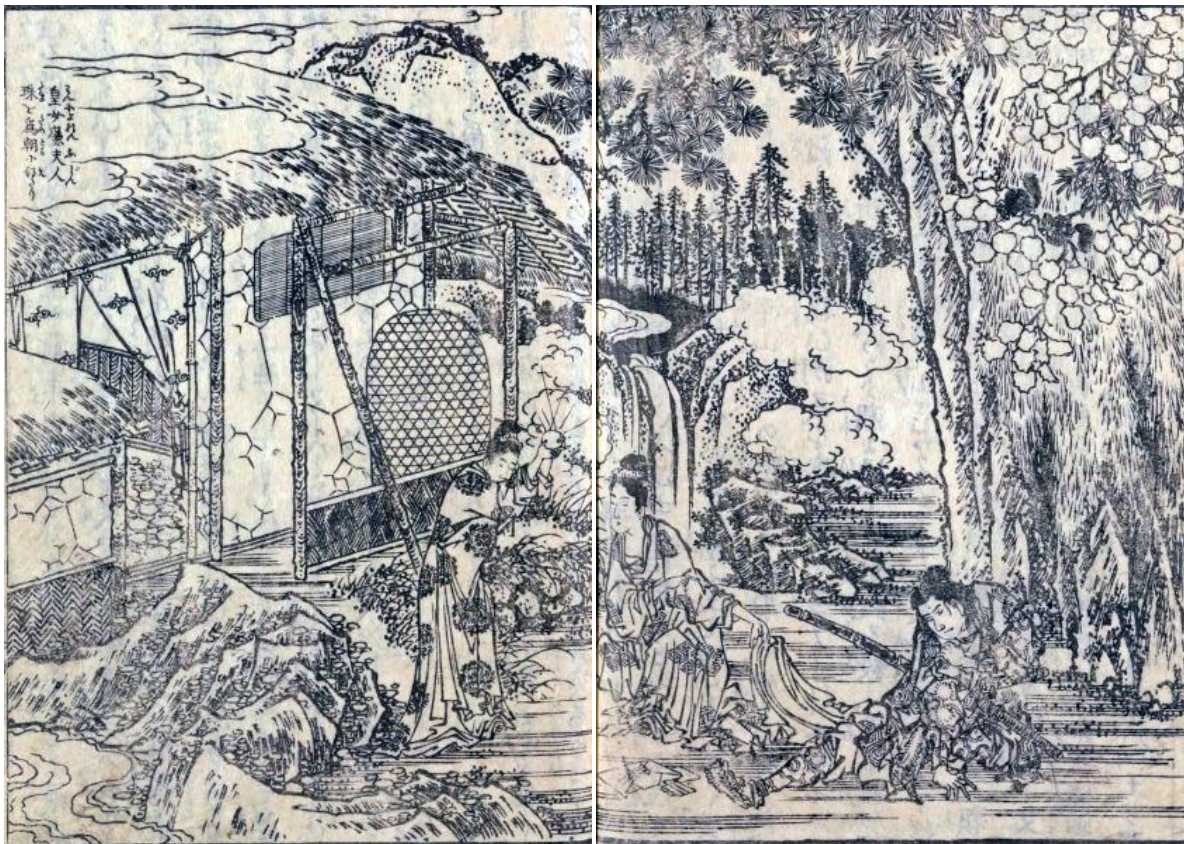
people of Ryukyu were all in their language, but rather than trouble the reader with a transliteration, these have all been rendered in the language of the main islands.)

Making haste, Taemtomo and Kiheiji arrived at the mountain and climbed halfway up where, facing the sea to the southwest, dense growth of pines and oaks covered sharp peaks and deep ravines, making it dark even during the day. Suddenly a thick fog arose plunging everything into pitch darkness and leaving them unable to see even one step ahead. The thought that Master Mōun's wizardry had created this to stop them in their tracks filled them with indignation. Guided by each other's voices, they groped their way along crags, pines, and cryptomerias, but



when they had almost reached their goal, Tametomo slipped on a broken ledge and fell headlong into a ravine a few thousand feet deep. Kiheiji, who was ahead, was unaware of this. Though Tametomo was agile when it came to arms and could leap over a seven-foot wall, in his agitated state he had made a misstep, and when he fell he hit his side against a tree stump, knocking him unconscious for some time. Then suddenly he heard a woman's voice saying, "This looks like my gem, exactly like mine." Lifting his head and looking around, he saw a woman about thirty-

seven or thirty-eight in age and a girl of fourteen or fifteen take the gem from his breast pocket and run away with gleeful countenances. He cried, “That gem is my treasure. Give it back!” But the girl did not return it, and only kept running away. Seeing this, the woman turned to Tametomo and said, laughing, “Hey Japanese man, please let the child have the gem. You no doubt trust me even less when I say that, but please hear me out while I explain. What could I hide? This girl is Princess Nei, *nakakusuku* [heir apparent] of the ruler of this land King Shō Nei, and I am Lady Ren, her mother. But the *chūfugimi* [queen] was deeply jealous of me, often slandering me, even going so far as to conspire with the wizard Master Mōun to say that if this princess were to take the throne, the country would certainly fall into chaos. The king had doubts about that and made no decision. Now formerly in the sea in front of Mount Taihei there lived a horned dragon that continually caused storms and tsunamis, destroying the five grains and harming the people of the land. One of the former kings was deeply distressed by this and,



offering orations to heaven and earth, entered into the tide himself and killed the beast, burying it in the Eastern Grotto by Mount Flower Vase. It is now known as Old Dragon Mountain. Now when the former king slew the horned dragon, he cut open its jaw and obtained two gems, one he called ‘ryū’ and the other ‘kyū.’ The country’s name used to be written with characters meaning

‘slashing [*ryū*] the horned dragon [*kyū*],’ but it refers to those two gems. They were passed down in the royal line much like the imperial seal in China. It is the custom in this country for a princess to ascend to the throne when there is no prince, and so last year when Princess Nei was made *nakakusuku*, King Shō Nei entrusted those two gems to her, whereupon she soon lost one of them. It is very strange that such a divine treasure should go missing without any cause. While we suspected that out of envy the *chūfugimi* had Master Mōun steal it, but without proof there was no way we could make an accusation, and though quite noble, his majesty the king is rather shallow minded and ultimately remained unaware of things. He immediately revoked the Princess’s status as *nakakusuku*, making her a commoner and abandoning both her and me in this place. The past has changed like the clouds over the mountains in the morning, and removed from the capital where it had become impossible to live out our lives, we could only weep and lament our fates during the three years we have been here. Our only visitors have been wind through the pine trees, storms, and the sound of waves beating on the rocky shore, so in our uneasy sleep we were startled at the sound of something falling in the unkempt garden of our hovel. We ran out to find a man apparently not of this country unconscious. We thought he must be a Japanese who came here for trade, and wondering if he might not have some medicine with him, approached and felt in his breast pocket, where we were surprised to find this gem. Inspecting it now closely, we find that it is not at all different from the gem the princess lost. Even if it is not the same gem, it is identical in appearance, so if we take it to the capital the princess could be reinstalled in court and I, too, could be exonerated from false accusations. For you, it is but one gem. For us it is a royal seal that admits us to the ranks of nobility. Now that I have explained things in such detail, please indulge us and let us have it.” Even as she implored, she gave no indication that she would return it anyway.

Sighing a few times, Tametomo fixed his eyes on them. Though haggard in appearance, their speech was refined. The girl had an air of nobility about her and was apparently no ordinary person, and so he thought perhaps he should just grant her wish. But after giving it some thought, he reconsidered and said, “That gem is something I obtained in my own country and is not the royal seal you’re seeking. You guessed correctly: I am a Japanese merchant. There is something I am seeking in this country, so I undertook the voyage here loaded with lots of precious goods, but last night the evil sorcerer Mōun stole all of them. I climbed this mountain to get them back but ended up falling here. Since you tended to my injuries I shouldn’t mind giving up that gem,

but I have lost all my goods. That gem is all I have left, and if I give it to you, what would I have to exchange for that which I seek? Please give it back right now.”

Upon hearing this, Lady Ren said, “If Princess Nei were in the capital, she would easily be able to procure for you whatever you are seeking, but as things stand, she had nothing in her personal possession, and could hardly provide a clod of earth or a single bowl of rice. But if she has the gem and presents it to the king, your wish can be granted. But first, tell me what it is that you seek.”

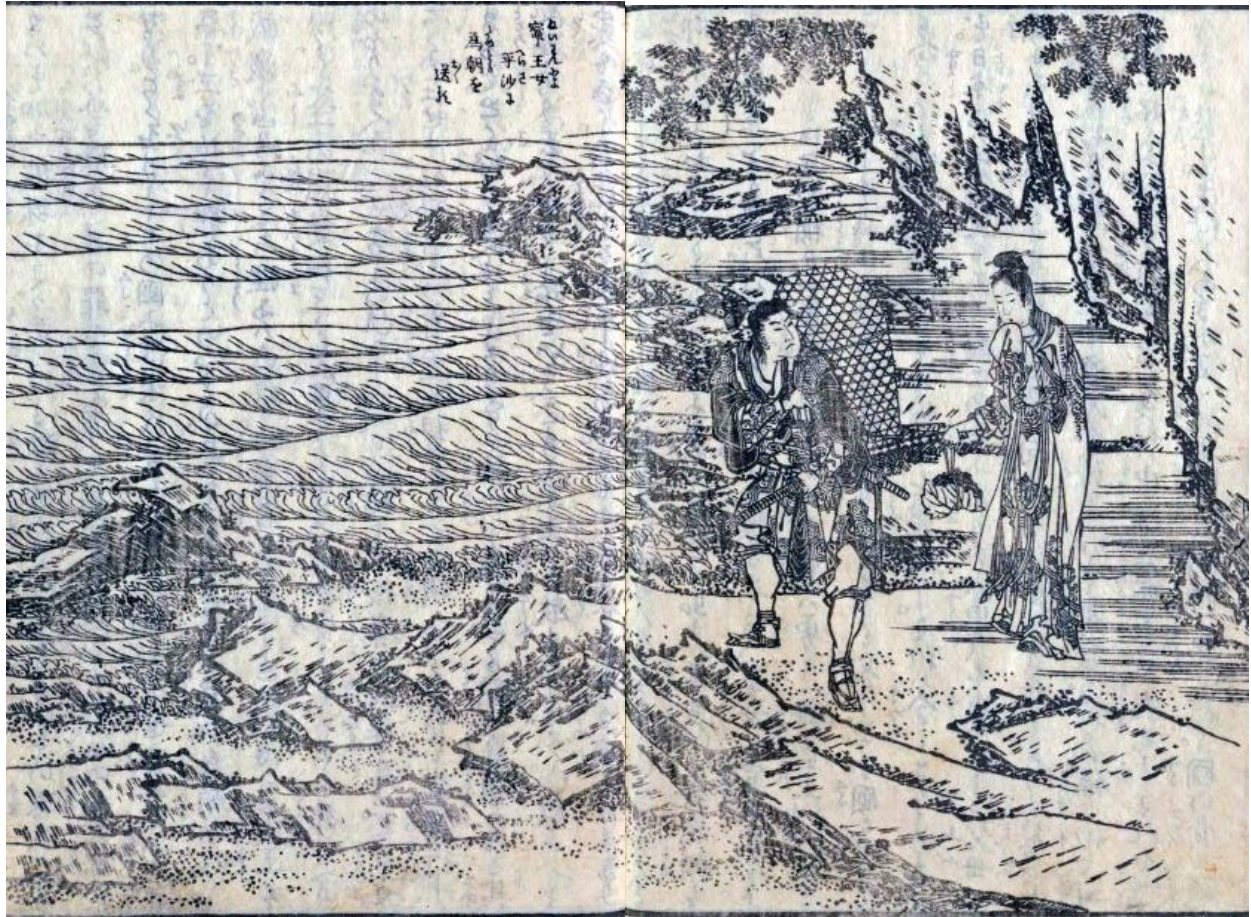
Tametomo nodded. “What I seek is not a product of this country. When I was in Japan, I released a crane that had a golden tag attached to its foot. After I released it, our emperor issued a command to present that crane to him. Though informed that it had been released some time ago, he insisted that I was lying and would not absolve me from the command. I consulted a soothsayer who told me that the crane is now in the kingdom of Ryukyu. Thus I braved several hundred leagues of waves and finally made it here, but have not yet found the crane. Instead, I’ve only suffered the misfortune of losing my goods, so you can compare my bad luck to yours.”

Upon hearing this, both Lady Ren and Princess Nei were overjoyed. “Such strange things happen! This morning a crane landed in our garden. It seemed very tame, and though we shooed it, it did not fly away. When we looked, we found it had a golden tag attached and appeared to have come from abroad. We put it in a crate and cared for it, and it is here now. It must be the crane you’re looking for.” They ran excitedly into the house and soon returned. When he saw the burden they were bearing, it was unmistakably that same crane. “This is it! This is it! I’ve finally found what I was hoping for. And so unexpectedly! Now I really can’t deny you the gem in your hand, so let me have the crane.” Tametomo had hardly finished saying these words before he approached and, taking the crate on his back, was about to leave.

But Lady Ren detained him, saying, “Since Princess Nei is indebted to you for the gem and for now being able to return to the capital, we don’t wish to let you return like this. Please stay a while until the Princess is ready to leave, and you’ll receive a reward.” Tametomo replied, “Now that I have the crane, my thoughts are only to return to my country as directly as an arrow flies. Even if tomorrow we are in different countries, our respective causes for joy are now equal

and we can be happy for each other. There is no need to reward me.” With that, he set out to the east.

Tametomo had gone about half a mile when he heard someone calling earnestly from behind. He turned and saw that it was Princess Nei who, running near and looking up at him,



said, “It seems you’re not familiar with the lay of the land in this country. For twenty or thirty leagues along the coast here running from the southeast there is no human habitation. It wouldn’t do for you to go hungry on the way. Please take this.” She handed him what appeared to be rice wrapped in paulownia leaves. He thanked her for her kindness and put it in his breast pocket. She said, “When I look at you closely, you don’t seem like a merchant. You are no doubt a valiant warrior. If you’ve fallen on hard times and have become so careworn, you should just remain in our country.” Secretly marveling at her perspicacity, Taemtomo replied, “I’m no one important. I have a father back in Japan. Even if I were to remain in this country and strike it rich, I’d rather be poor and with my parents where they are.”

The Princess again spoke, appealing to him from various angles, “In that case, will you take me to Japan with you? It might seem like a stroke of good fortune that I now have a gem and can go to the capital, but that might rather turn out to invite disaster. In any event, the *chūfugimi* is extremely jealous and hates me with a passion. And as if that weren’t enough, my father has been deluded by Master Mōun and has no regard for the expenses of the kingdom. And that’s not all; it’s difficult to determine that this is the gem I lost, and if it’s not, then I would be deceiving my father in order to expiate my crime. On the other hand, if he doesn’t accept it, then it would amount to a rejection of my mother’s kindness. Therefore, I do not wish to live out my life in this country. The Chinese have a saying: ‘The common man is without sin, but he who holds the gem is guilty.’¹ That describes my lot.”

Tametomo was deeply moved. “What you say makes sense, but it is the *chūfugimi* that is despicable. How could the king be without fatherly affection? Please resolve to return to the capital right away.” Just as he was giving such admonitions, Lady Ren found them. “Oh, so this is where you are, Princess! It will be tomorrow or the day after that we leave for the capital. What are you doing wandering about here? Hurry back home!” While she was thus urging the Princess to go back, Tametomo dashed off, hurrying along the way, and found that what she had told him was correct: though he kept on going, there was no sign of human habitation, just an endless expanse of sand. When it was starting to get dark, he was hungry and, seating himself on a flat stone, took out the wrapped rice he had received. He opened it to find that it did not contain rice at all, but rather some kind of steamed yams of a sort he had never seen in Japan. They were yellow in color and very sweet in taste. He was filled eating only two or three of them.

In later generations, these yams were imported to Satsuma, where they are known as Ryukyu yams. Two varieties—Ryukyu yams (popularly known in eastern Japan as Satsuma yams, because they were first cultivated there) and kabocha (a small squash)² have recently come to be widely cultivated in our country and are staple vegetables for the lower classes. Women are especially fond of them. They are an important food source in years of famine. There is no harm in eating them, but Ryukyu yams are said not to go with India ink, and kabocha not with black pepper. People generally know that Ryukyu yams and India ink do not go together, but they are

¹ 小人無罪，抱玉而有罪 appears with minor variations in several Chinese sources.

² Bakin seems to have been unaware that the kabocha squash was actually introduced to Japan by the Portuguese in the sixteenth century.

not aware that kabocha and black pepper also do not. So out of solicitude the author has inserted this into the tale.

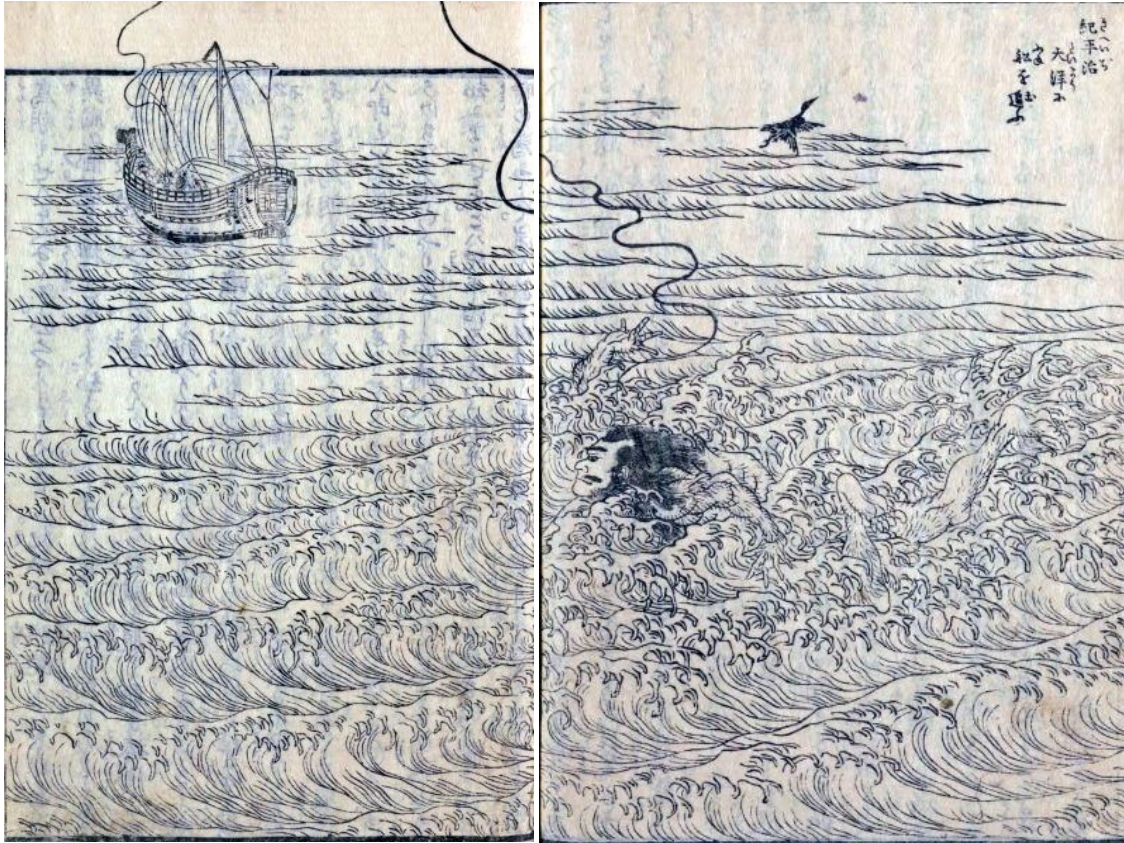
Chapter Seven

Kiheiji pursues a ship and throws an iron ball,
Nokaze startles a horse and bites a wooden club.

Chinzei Hachirō Tametomo, having abruptly left Princess Nei and her mother, ran energetically toward the east along the beach. Though it was already dark, he continued his urgent race all through the night, and about the time he had covered twenty or thirty leagues, he approached a village where a rooster announced the break of day. As he briskly continued on his course, he unexpectedly came to a harbor where boats were moored. By then it was completely light, and taking advantage of fair winds, one large boat had untied its mooring rope. It was a Japanese vessel, none other than the one he had boarded to come to this place. He was elated and was about to jump aboard, but then what about Kiheiji? It would be dishonorable for him to abandon his companion. But on the other hand, if he missed this boat, a quick return would be unlikely. He hesitated for some time as he considered what he should do, but concluded that if he waited for Kiheiji and missed this opportunity, precious time might pass in vain while his father's fate would be in the balance. Kiheiji was accustomed to living in this country. He decided that even if he abandoned him now, it would not mean that he could never return, so he quickly jumped aboard. The sails immediately filled with wind and the boat sailed off, steered in a northeast direction.

Now Half-mile Stone-throwing Kiheiji was alarmed and at a loss after his master had gone missing on Old Dragon Mountain and, though searching all about, was unable to find him. Following a fruitless hunt, he returned to the inn where he waited all night, but his apprehension only grew as his master did not come back. And as the boat they were to have taken was scheduled to set sail at dawn and all of the guests at the inn had left, his unease intensified. When daylight arrived he headed to the harbor where he saw the young master aboard a departing vessel and frantically dashed toward it, but the boat was already more than two hundred feet from the shore. Tametomo also saw Kiheiji in the distance and said, "That's my companion. Row this boat back!" Standing on the shore, Kiheiji shouted, "Bring that boat back!" But its sails filled with a strong wind, the boat moved swiftly away and could not be turned back. The boatmen appeared indifferent as they moved farther out to sea. Tametomo looked on helplessly with a pained conscience. Stamping his feet, Kiheiji said to himself, "Though he happened to choose

me as a guide to a foreign land, what honor would there be for me to return to Japan if I have to go back alone? I'll catch up with them!" With that he stripped off his clothing, lifted his head and sprang into the vast ocean. Now he had grown up by the western sea and was a veteran swimmer,

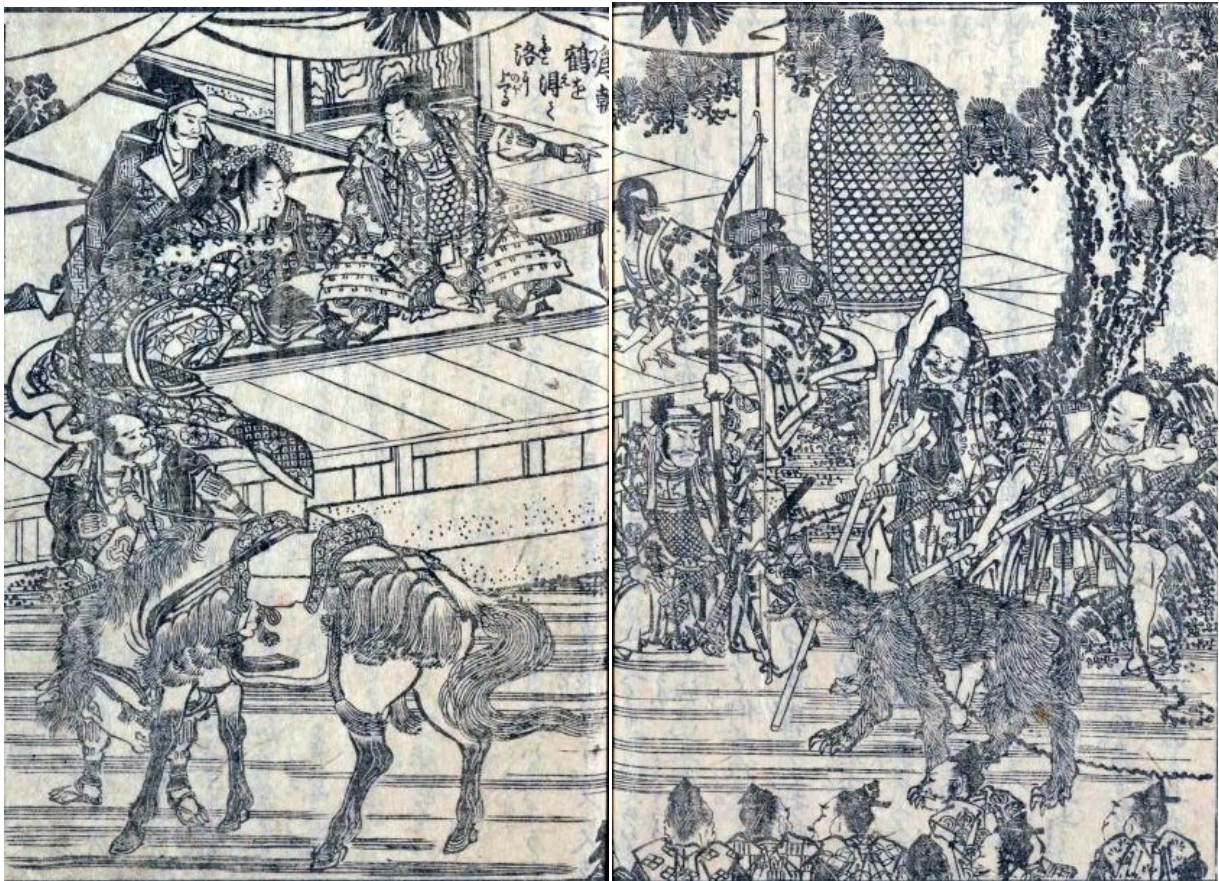


so he braved the surging surf like a turtle. As he bobbed in and out of the water he managed to come somewhat closer to the boat, but then tall and furious waves separated them, and in the swift current he was unable to close the gap. Looking on this scene, Tametomo fretted, "Save him!" But since he had concealed his identity to make this journey, the boatmen were unaware that he was Chinzei Hachirō, so he could not very well issue a command. Not only that, but though they were boatmen, the progress of a vessel running at full sail on the open ocean was not easy to control. Tametomo was agonizing, wondering if he would see Kiheiji die. But the latter, having anticipated such circumstances, always carried an iron ball attached to a rope several hundred feet long. While swimming he took it out of his loincloth and, beating the waves with his left hand, with his right he threw the iron ball, its rope tied to his wrist. True to aim, the iron ball fell in the boat, whereupon Tametomo took it in hand and gently reeled the rope in, so that

Kiheiji was effortlessly able to spring up onto the boat. Tametomo finally felt relieved and, deeply moved and overjoyed, he praised him, "Now you more than deserve the nickname 'Half-mile Stone-thrower.'" Then in private he described how he obtained the crane, and how when he saw the boat departing he had no other choice than to board it. Looking at the crane, Kiheiji was ecstatic, and related what happened to him after leaving Old Dragon Mountain. Since Kiheiji spoke eloquently about the situation, everyone on the boat treated him warmly, saying that though it is generally known that northerners are good at horsemanship while southerners excel at swimming, they had never heard of anyone who could do in the water what he had done. Not long after that, because of the disturbances in the kingdom of Ryukyu, trade with that country was cut off and Japanese stopped making voyages there. (More details about the fortunes of that country will appear in later chapters.)

But setting that account aside for now, since after Tametomo's journey to the south there had been no word from him, the many retainers in Dazaifu—and especially Tadakuni and Shiranui—were very anxious, making orations to Watatsumi, deity of the oceans, or offerings to Ubusuna, deity of his birthplace, intent only on earnestly pleading for his speedy return. In the capital as well, Lord Tameyoshi often sent couriers to inquire whether or not he had returned. The messengers' trips were numerous as, day after day each sundown was counted until three months had passed and only ten—then five—days remained until the hundredth. He thought that if more time passed, their efforts would be in vain, and was all the more distraught. But rapid communication from a foreign country several hundred leagues over the ocean could not very well be expected. Just when everyone was in such a state of mind, the watchman came rushing from the lookout on the beach, announcing, "The young master's boat has docked, safe and sound!" Everyone's spirits were immediately revived, as if welcome rain had fallen on withering plants. In order to send soldiers to meet him they hurried to the shore with horses and conveyance. Shiranui awaited him having changed her clothing and preparing a seat of honor for him. Before long, on swift horses and leading numerous soldiers as well as Half-mile Stone-thrower Kiheiji, Tametomo arrived carrying the crane. Aso no Tadakuni, too, came out of the western gate to meet him and congratulate him on a safe return. When they reached the guest quarters, Shiranui rushed out unable to contain her joy, and Kiheiji's wife Yatsushiro, gorgeously attired, came out with a saké decanter and cups. The felicitous activities of that day could hardly be numbered, and it would only be tiresome to record them here.

Then facing everyone gathered there, Tametomo said, “It owes only to the good fortune of our sovereign and my father that I was able to travel to a foreign land and back without being swallowed by the sea, and moreover I obtained the crane. When I think about it, it is a gift from my nurse’s son, Satō Sueshige, who was killed by lightning.” Then he proceeded to related how he exchanged the gem for the crane and about Master Mōun’s sorcery, the misfortunes of Princess Nei and Lady Ren, and even about Kiheiji’s swimming, leaving nothing out. Everyone listened with rapt attention, deeply moved, but especially Yatsushiro seemed very pleased to hear of her husband’s exceptional feat. Tametomo again spoke, “Few days remain of those determined by the cloistered emperor, and my father must be anxiously waiting. I shall depart this very day in order to present the crane at the earliest possible moment. But to take a large retinue of soldiers would only slow our pace and complicate things. So I’ll be accompanied only by the stableman Sukima Kasue no Akushichi,¹ Tedorī no Yoji, Tedorī no Yosaburō, Ōya no



¹ Appears in *Hōgen monogatari* as Akima Kazoe no Akushichi, the brother of Sutō Iesue.

Shinzaburō, Koshiya no Genta,² Matsura no Jirō, Uchide no Kihachi,³ Takama no Saburō and others totaling twenty-six or twenty-seven horsemen. Kiheiji must be exhausted by a long journey, so he'll remain here along with Yoshida Hyōe,⁴ Takama no Shirō and the others.” Kiheiji came forward and entreated him, “I have attended you all the way from Bungo, and now that you are going to the capital, it is not my wish to remain behind. If I am fatigued by the long journey, you must be also, aren't you? With all respect, my desire is only to do my utmost to serve you, and that wish is in no less intense in me than in anyone. Please reconsider and allow me to attend you.” Nodding, Tametomo replied, “What you say is reasonable. It would not do for me to deny your request. Now, everyone prepare for departure!” Ready in mind, all responded, “Yes, sir!” Without a moment's delay they readied themselves and lined up in the courtyard. Then having Yatsushiro pour for him, he again drank three cups. He bade farewell to Tadakuni and Shiranui and, just as he was about to mount his horse, the wolf Nokaze ran out into the courtyard and bit the hem of his master's clothing, tugging to detain him. This frightened the horse, which started bucking. Seeing this from afar, Shiranui hurriedly whispered to Yatsushiro, “I have something to say to the young master.” Then she went out onto the veranda and said in a serious tone, “As I look at what is going on with Nokaze, all of this somehow weighs on me. My request is that you cancel today's departure and send some able retainers to the capital to present the crane.” Tadakuni then added in admonition, “Formerly in China during the Three Kingdoms period, a dog kept by Zhuge Ke⁵ of Wu tugged at its master's robe to warn him of danger,⁶ and in our country Fujiwara no Michinaga's white dog stood in the way of its master's carriage to prevent him from running over buried earthenware that bore a curse against anyone who passed over it.⁷ More recently, we should consider what happened with Yamao. Just as my daughter has said, at this time wouldn't a journey to the capital be fraught with ill fortune and offer little that is auspicious?” Tametomo replied, smiling, “Your words are not without reason. And yet ought one who has received an imperial command and who seeks to be forgiven of having been disowned these many years by his father be dissuaded from going to the capital because of

² Appears in *Hōgen monogatari* as Tomeya no Genta.

³ Appears in *Hōgen monogatari* as Utte no Jōhachi.

⁴ Appears in *Hōgen monogatari* as Yoshida Tarō.

⁵ 203-253, military general and politician of Eastern Wu and nephew to the more famous Zhuge Liang (181-234).

⁶ This episode is recorded in the 108th chapter of *Sanguo yanyi*.

⁷ Fujiwara no Michinaga (966-1028) was a powerful regent. Accounts of this episode appear in volume six of *Kojidan*, in volume 14 of *Uji shūi monogatari*, and chapter seven of *Jikkinshō*.

something minor? Even if I should end up being beheaded, that would be better than being branded as unfilial for the rest of my life. As the ancient saying goes, ‘If you see something questionable and don’t question it, its questionableness disappears.’⁸ Don’t let this weigh on you. I’ll soon return. Shoo Nokaze away!” Seeing their master’s impatience, one of the retainers fastened a chain around the wolf’s neck and steadily tried to pull the beast away while another attempted to drive it away with a club. But Nokaze would not budge, only letting out a high-pitched heart-rending howl as it bit the club. Knitting their brows, many present thought that perhaps no good would come of going to the capital after all. Neither Shiranui nor Yatsushiro, who were never shy about valor, were able to stop him from going. But sharing the same unspoken feeling, they were unable to dam the wellsprings of their hearts and time after time had to fight back tears. Even as they cheered him on in his noble aspirations, uneasiness upon thinking yesterday’s distant voyage over the south seas and the even greater uncertainty of what might await him in today’s trip to the capital made them want to have the departure delayed at least one night, whatever fate might lie ahead for their husbands. Seeing their anxiety, Tametomo guffawed, “They say that once a man leaves home, he puts wife and child out of his mind. Whether weal or woe is up to Heaven. Your apprehension is most unbecoming.” With that reprimand, he nimbly mounted his horse and, cracking the whip, went on his way. How sad this parting of men and wives, never to see a return. But that their vows to each other were not voided will be considered later.

⁸ Bakin’s likely source for this is the ninth volume of *Wuzazu*.

Chapter Eight

At Hōshōgon'in¹ the young master demonstrates skill with the bow,
In the mountains at Shirakawa, Half-mile Stone-thrower laments the parting.

The Rokujō Police Lieutenant Lord Tameyoshi had received no word from Kyushu regarding the crane that Tametomo had released, though only one day remained of the time Cloistered Emperor Toba had allotted to him to present it. Just as he was agonizing over his fate, the young master appeared in the capital carrying the crane. When he arrived at the mansion on Rokujō Horikawa, his father was exceedingly elated, immediately allowing a meeting with his son. "Your loyal service in this matter sufficiently compensates for your past faults." And as Tametomo gazed on his father's unscathed countenance he expressed his gladness as well. Looking closely, however, his father appeared to have aged more than the five years of their mutual absence and, feeling remorse for that unfilial, protracted estrangement, was unable to restrain tears. Then without delay the Police Lieutenant had the crane carried to the Cloistered Emperor's palace and presented it. But the Cloistered Emperor's son, Emperor Konoe,² was unwell, and his majesty spent each day weeping. Though he did glance at the crane, he did not appear to be pleased, and said, "Long ago, for the repose of numerous resentful souls, Yoshiie released a crane, but there is no point in my keeping it. Release it!" When they set it free, the crane again emerged from its crate and ascended into the heavens, at once rendering all of Tametomo's efforts vain.

After that, while no declaration was forthcoming from his majesty, Tametomo was thinking of returning soon to Kyushu. But one day, Vice Councilor Tokudaiji no Kin'yoshi³ who was chosen to administer government affairs, relayed to a secretary an imperial order. The text was as follows:

Tametomo, long having lived in Dazaifu, has slighted our national laws and completely disobeyed imperial commands, earning a reputation for recklessness. His violent acts are excessive, and he must be put under restraint immediately. The imperial command is to be carried out accordingly.

¹ A temple near the Shirakawa Palace.

² 1139-1155; r. 1142-1155.

³ Fujiwara no Kin'yoshi (1115-1161).

Tameyoshi was greatly taken aback by this edict and muttered, “The reason he showed his martial strength in Chinzei was to reprove the indolence of the provincial leadership and the cruelty and injustice of the officials, and not to revolt against the imperial household. Even if his faithful services are not rewarded on this occasion, I cannot understand why he should come under such censure.” Tametomo, on the other hand, remained unperturbed, saying that it was all Shinzei’s doing. As if he had been expecting this all along, he sequestered himself and awaited the verdict. At the same time, his majesty was no doubt in a frenzied state of mind: without forewarning, on the third day of the seventh month Cloistered Emperor Konoe passed away. They say he was seventeen years old. The grief of the Retired Emperor (Toba) and his consort (Bifukumon’in)⁴ was incomparable. Only the New Cloistered Emperor (Sutoku), seeing this as an possibility to be restored to his former status, was hopeful that Prince Shigehito (his eldest son)⁵ might succeed to the throne. But that was not to be. Through the scheming of Bifukumon’in, Go-Shirakawa (birth name Masahito)⁶—at that time the fourth imperial prince—was installed as crown prince and finally ascended to the throne. This was all planned because Cloistered Emperor Toba had heard rumors that Emperor Konoe’s early demise was the result of Sutoku’s maledictions. Because of this, Sutoku’s resentment only grew stronger.

Thus the year ended between the period of imperial mourning and the coronation, and on the seventh day of the fourth month of Kyūju 3 [1156], the era name was changed to Hōgen. When those in Dazaifu heard that, from this point forward Tametomo would be confined indefinitely to the Rokujō Horikawa mansion, everyone was alarmed, cursing and saying, “We thought from the first that nothing good would come of this.” But amid the uproar, unable to give vent to her flood of thoughts, Shiranui went with Kiheiji’s wife, Yatsushiro, on a pilgrimage to the Tenjin Shrine in Dazaifu to offer prayers that she might once more be united with her husband.

But setting that aside for now, on the second day of the seventh month of this year, Retired Emperor Toba passed away. Preceded in death by Cloistered Emperor Konoe the previous year, his demise may have been hastened by grief, but they say he had been ill since the fourth month. He was not yet sixty years old, and it was most regrettable that he should not live

⁴ Fujiwara no Nariko (1117-1160).

⁵ 1140-1162.

⁶ 1127-1192; r. 1155-1158.

longer. At the same time, there were those things that had been on the mind of the New Cloistered Emperor [Sutoku] that on this occasion plunged the world into chaos. In response to this, Tameyoshi's heir Governor of Shimotsuke Yoshitomo⁷ was ordered by the imperial court to arrest Fujiwara no Mitsusada, an official in the Ministry of Central Affairs who was attending the vacant mansion at Tōsanjō, and torture him until he revealed everything about the New Cloistered Emperor's insurrection. When the New Cloistered Emperor heard of this, he knew that there was no longer anything to hide, and so to begin with he summoned available warriors. Of the many he tried to mobilize, Yoshitomo had already been summoned by the imperial court, and his father Tameyoshi did not respond, remaining in his mansion. The command was frequently repeated to go call Tameyoshi, but he firmly refused. In the meantime, High Steward of the Sakyō Ward Lord Norinaga was sent to the Rokujō Horikawa mansion entreating Tameyoshi most courteously, who found himself unable to decline any longer. Leading six of his sons—Shirō Saemon Yorikata,⁸ Gorō Kamonnosuke Yorinaka,⁹ Kamo no Rokurō Tamemune,¹⁰ Shichirō Tamenari,¹¹ Chinzei Hachirō Tametomo, and Genkurō Tamenaka¹²—he rushed to the Shirakawa Palace. The New Cloistered Emperor was exceedingly grateful, bestowing upon him two manors—one at Iba in the province of Ōmi, and one at Aoyagi in the province of Mino—and since he assigned to serve at the upper north gate of the palace, Governor of Noto Suenaga was ordered to give him an imperial sword named Unomaru.

At the council to plan for battle, Chinzei Hachirō Tametomo wore the Eight-Dragon armor over a ceremonial court robe embroidered with a lion-dog in a circle. The armor was covered with rough bindings of white Chinese damask. The sheath of his sword, five feet and three inches long, was encased in bear hide leather and his sturdy bow was seven feet and five inches long. Above its grip was a groove that could take arrows of thirty-six finger width length fletched with black feathers. Attended by a retainer carrying his helmet, the figure he cut as he strode out onto the broad veranda exceeded the valor of Fan Kuai,¹³ the wisdom of Chen Ping,¹⁴

⁷ 1123-1160, father of Minamoto no Yoritomo (1147-1199).

⁸ Minamoto no Yorikata (d. 1156).

⁹ Minamoto no Yorinaka (d. 1156).

¹⁰ Minamoto no Tamemune (d. 1156).

¹¹ Minamoto no Tamenari (d. 1156).

¹² Minamoto no Tamenaka (d. 1156).

¹³ 242-189 BCE, a general of the Western Han, noted for his bravery.

¹⁴ D. 179 BCE, chancellor in Western Han, famed for his skill as a strategist.

and in his skill with the bow not inferior to Yang Youji.¹⁵ Everyone praised him, saying “All hail to our valiant chief!” Even the New Cloistered Emperor seated in the main hall parted the rattan blinds to have a look, and was deeply moved. “He seems to have grown a head taller since the time over five years ago when he caught Norishige’s and Norikazu’s arrows. He is indeed what is meant by ‘being a match for a thousand.’” He then commanded, “If you have a good plan for total victory, let us hear it.”

In answer to the command, Tametomo rose to the occasion to respond to the emergency and presented a plan to crush the opposition all at once. But perhaps counting on declining fate of the imperial faction, the Minister of the Left Lord Yorinaga¹⁶ opposed this, and as they were waiting for the enemy to advance, at dawn on the eleventh Kiyomori and Yoshitomo approached at the head of an imperial force of several thousand, resulting in a heated battle. In the midst of that, Tametomo led the twenty-eight mounted retainers he had brought from Dazaifu, attacking the enemy on both flanks, then from front and back. Then charging their horses in a direct frontal assault, in only one engagement they routed Kiyomori’s hosts and frightened his brother Yoshitomo by shooting the star off his helmet with an arrow. Though for a time they were winning, yet the forces of the New Cloistered Emperor were up against an enormous army and ended up losing ground as the imperial forces broke their line in places and immediately set things ablaze. The New Cloistered Emperor fled through the eastern gate toward northern Shirakawa, and though his soldiers saw his flight, they were separated from him by raging flames and choking smoke and, unable to accompany him, they scattered in various directions. At this time only Tametomo and his twenty-eight mounted retainers did not retreat but plunged into fierce battle allowing the New Cloistered Emperor to escape. But finally exhausted and with swords broken, Takama no Saburō was brought down by Kaneko no Jūrō,¹⁷ while Tedorī no Yoji was grappled by Senba Shichirō and Akushichi Bettō’s head was taken by Saitō Sanemori.¹⁸ Also Ōya no Shinsaburō, Koshiya no Genta, Matura no Jirō, Tedorī no Yosaburō, and Uchide no Kihachi all fell in battle. But Half-mile Stone-throwing Kihachi did not suffer so much as a scratch and, together with his master, stood his ground. Tametomo turned to him and said, “Now that both his majesty and my father have escaped so far, you should remain away from the

¹⁵ See ch. 1, n30.

¹⁶ Fujiwara no Yorinaga (1120-1156).

¹⁷ Kaneko Ietada (1138-1216), a retainer to Yoshitomo.

¹⁸ 1111-1183.

conflict. I shall follow after them later.” The New Cloistered Emperor and Tameyoshi had escaped peacefully without enemy pursuit or hindrance and had already gone a considerable distance. Then Tametomo turned his horse back at a gallop. Though in his quiver there remained but one arrow with a turnip-shaped head, he was determined to show the world what he could do. As he rode past the Hōshōgon’in, his arrow went whizzing into the pillar of its gate. To begin with, Tametomo had carried into this battle two quivers containing twenty-four arrows each, then three quivers with eighteen arrows each, and finally three quivers with sixteen arrows each. He had shot the star off Yoshitomo’s helmet and had severed Ōba no Kageyoshi’s knee joint. Never wasting a second shot, with one arrow he had struck two or even three horsemen, and luring the enemy close had twisted off their heads or grabbed them and thrown them to their deaths. But just as when a great building is about to collapse, a single tree cannot support it, regrettably facing inevitable defeat he ended up taking flight.

And so Tametomo escaped to Ōmi. Stopping his horse for a while in the mountains of Shirakawa, he said to Kiheiiji, “What I most regret is Lord Yorinaga’s not using my plan. It’s



because we waited for the enemy to attack that we lost the battle, and now we don't know where his majesty and my father are. And yet this is no reason for me to take my life. I wish to search out my father and see what is going on in the world. You must return to Kyushu and inform Tadakuni, Shiranui, and others about what has happened here." But Kiheiji gave no ear to that command, saying, "This is a most unexpected thing for you to say. My not sharing the fate of my twenty-seven comrades and remaining with you was for the purpose of making your future course certain. No matter what you say, I shall not return." Tametomo again spoke, "I completely understand your loyalty. But if our families don't hear that this battle has been lost and that my whereabouts is unknown, then the long harbored resentment of Kikuchi and Harada clans¹⁹ will see an occasion for a surprise attack. Then our families in Dazaifu, unaware of these things, will be unprepared and quickly taken as prisoners and will suffer humiliation. It would be the end of them. At any rate, make haste to return, join forces with Tadakuni, escape when you are able to, and if you cannot, then die together in battle. As long as I am alive, this is my only concern."

After Tametomo's demonstrative exhortation, Kiheiji finally acceded, "I shall do as you say, then, and hasten to Dazaifu where we shall fight a glorious battle. But if that is not the case, then together with Tadakuni and Shiranui, we shall find a suitable place to sequester ourselves and wait for an occasion to reunite with you. I only hope that his majesty is able to endure the privations and survive." Upon hearing this, Tametomo said smiling, "Nothing will be neglected on my account. Now don't show faint-hearted sorrow at parting. Now if warrior monks see you armor, they'll try to take it. Go quickly, before you attract suspicion." Thus Kiheiji had no choice but to return along his former route, while Tametomo hurried on his mount toward Shiga.

¹⁹ Powerful clans in the Kumamoto region. See chapter 2, n3.

Chapter Nine

Nokaze dies in battle while opening an escape route,
Bringing up the rear, Yatsushiro is struck by a stray arrow.

The imperial forces split its soldiers into groups to search everywhere for those who had fled, beginning with the New Cloistered Emperor and also for the main warriors that had escaped the assault. At a conference of court officials, it was noted that it would be an alarming matter if Tametomo were to escape to the western provinces and again raise a rebellion. They dispatched a courier to the Kikuchi and Harada clans commanding them to take Tametomo's family hostage.

Dazaifu being far away, word had not yet arrived from the capital concerning the battle. None of the warriors there, not even Tadakuni or Shiranui, had any idea what was about to befall them. Ever since the preceding year they had only watched the heavens, wondering if the young master might return that day, or hoping for a letter the next day. As they anxiously waited, just past midnight on the twenty-third of the seventh month of Hōgen 1 [1156] there was a sudden clamor. Thinking it suspicious, Tadakuni arose from his bed alone and when he went to the guardhouse to check on it, the principal retainers—Yoshida Hyōe and Takama no Shirō—came running in a flurry. Kunitada saw them and demanded “What a racket! What’s going on here?” The two men replied, “True or not, it is rumored that when Retired Emperor Toba passed away, the New Cloistered Emperor raised an insurrection, and at dawn on the eleventh a battle ensued, in which the New Cloistered Emperor was defeated. The governor of Shimotsuke (Yoshitomo) had been summoned to the court, while the police lieutenant (Tameyoshi) led six of his sons including Lord Hachirō (Tametomo) to the side of the New Cloistered Emperor. After their defeat in battle, the father and brothers were all scattered, and we do not know who survived. Pursuant to all of this, having received an imperial command the Kikuchi and Harada clans now have an excuse to vent the resentments they have harbored all these years and are about to invade. That is why there is so much commotion. No one has yet been able to verify all of this, but if it proves doubtful, we shall inform you.”

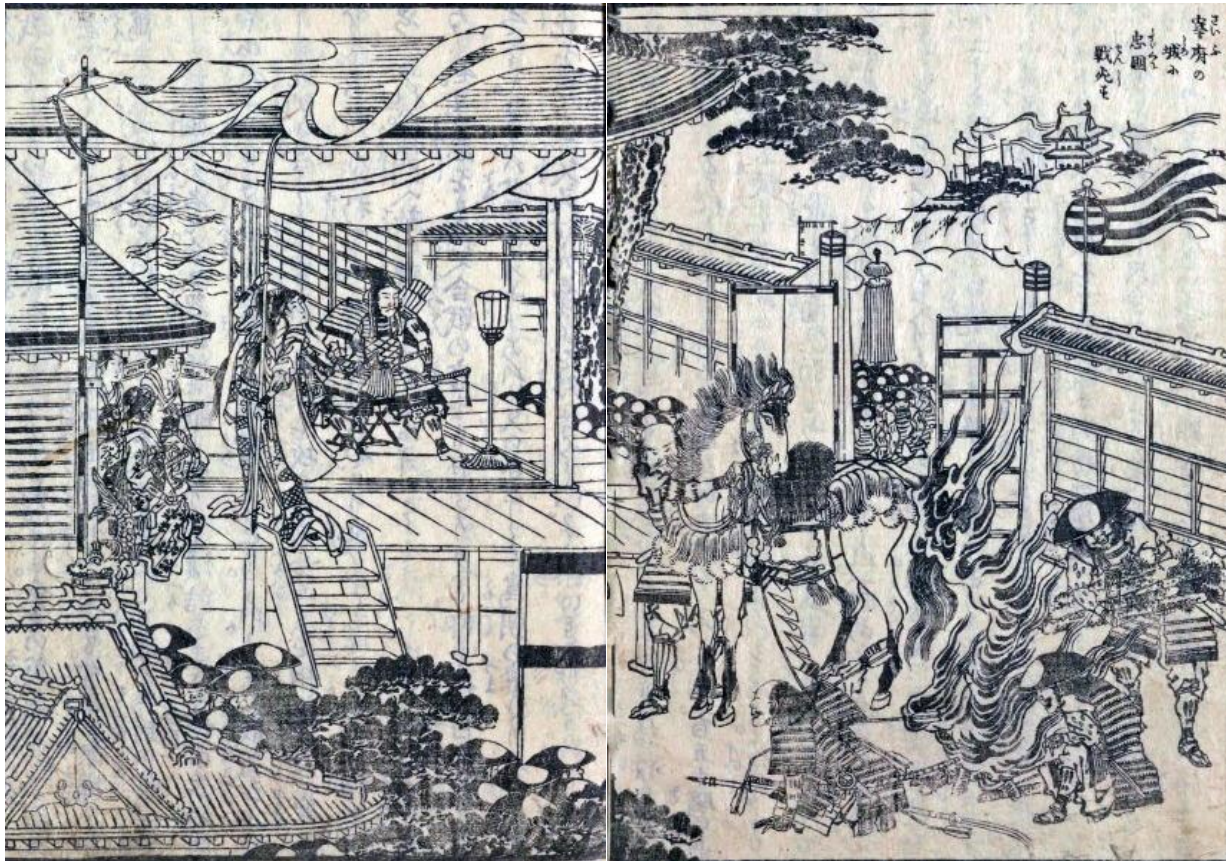
Upon hearing this, Tadakuni knitted his brows and said, “Considering what is right for the occasion, if the First Cloistered Emperor (Toba) passed away, it somehow does not ring true that the New Cloistered Emperor should, without a trace of grief, vie for the throne. But it is probably not just a groundless rumor that the Kikuchi and Harada clans will advance on us.

Tametomo has been away in the capital for a long time, and many of our principal retainers are there also. Waiting for such a chance, those two clans have circulated baseless rumors about conditions in the capital and are no doubt planning an imminent assault. Prepare for battle right away!” No sooner had he given that command than battle cries broke out here and there, echoing all about. Yoshida and Takama heard them, but remained calm and collected. “Well, it seems that the rumors were not false, and the enemy appears to be at hand. We shall go face them and halt their advance. Please be calm and put on your armor.” With that, they withdrew in a flash. Then Tadakuni summoned Shiranui and, explaining the situation, donned his armor and left.

Then Yoshida and Takama ascended the watchtower by the main gate. Facing the enemy encampment, they shouted, “Upon the passing of his majesty the First Cloistered Emperor, who is it that wishes to take up arms for selfish gain? Identify yourselves!” Then from out of the assailants’ camp came forth two men, one with armor bindings of deutzia blossom pattern, wearing a silver helmet with a star ornament and mounted on a horse of ruddy color, and the other with tri-colored armor bindings, wearing a helmet with deer antlers and mounted on a light brown horse. They approached in the light of a watch fire. “Don’t you know? In the capital the New Cloistered Emperor’s insurrectionist plot was exposed, and Tametomo, whom you have taken to be your lord, went over to his side. In the battle on the eleventh of this month he was roundly defeated and no one knows whether he’s still alive. We are the most trusted retainers of Kikuchi and Harada, Tamana no Tarō and Udo no Heizaburō. Our lord suddenly received an imperial command to take as prisoners Tametomo’s household, and we have come to carry that out. Immediately put down your bows, take off your helmets, and submit to this order.”

Takama no Shirō laughed loudly. “You come for a night attack on the residence of our young lord, who governs the nine provinces and who is known far and wide for his valor, that’s an act worthy of mountain brigands or common bandits tempted by the god of death. But the Kikuchi and Harada clans are of such lofty status that you received an imperial command! Since it’s so late at night we have nothing on hand to entertain you properly, but we have prepared some arrows with well forged heads, so please accept those.” No sooner had he spoken than he pulled his bow and sent whizzing an arrow that sank deep into the helmet of Tamana no Tarō, who straightway fell from his horse with a thud. Arrows began flying furiously, but when there was a lull and it appeared that the enemy’s strength was flagging, Kunitada had the castle gate opened and, leading a hundred and fifty mounted soldiers on both flanks, charged out at full tilt. Seeing

this, both Yoshida and Takama descended from the watchtower and followed their comrades out to face the enemy, challenging them without so much as a sideward glance. Though the enemy host was large, many were cut down by Tadakuni's hundred and fifty horsemen who were determined to battle to the death. After the enemy had retreated over a hundred yards, Tadakuni did not pursue them far but gave his men and horses rest, whereupon he discovered that thirty of them had sustained wounds and twenty-three had fallen.



Shiranui, who by habit was heroic, put on a studded headband, fastened on gauntlets, shin guards, and armor, and with her white-handled *naginata* at her side marshalled Kiheiji's wife Yatsuhiro and two dozen or so chambermaids, all in battle attire and sitting on camp stools. Wanting to take up where her father had left off, she said to him, "You must be exhausted from battle. We shall go out and assume a defensive position." Tadakuni shook his head. "When I first heard that there was a battle in the capital, I thought it was just a groundless rumor spread by the enemy. But now that I see their valiant temperament, it seems that it must not be a total lie. Yet even if the young master suffered defeat, he's a military commander without equal, possessing

wisdom and courage, so it is unlikely that he was killed. And yet the leaders of these nine provinces, always moved by flattery, have this day become our enemy, and since we have no way to expect backup forces, even if you were to succeed in bringing down a hundred or two hundred of the assailants, it would be of no benefit to me. And though the fortifications of the young master who is so renowned in the nine provinces is being assaulted, it would be humiliating to have it said that I conspired with women for its defense. I'll continue to fight as long as I have arrows, after which I'll honorably commit *seppuku*. Escape through the rear gate before the enemy reaches it, and go to meet the young master. Convey to him my resolution, and tell him of the circumstances of the battle here."

Tearfully, Shiranui said, "I may be a woman, but I'm also my father's child and Tametomo's wife. How can I simply escape, not knowing whether my husband is alive and disregarding my father's death in battle? Especially since I lost my mother at a young age and was brought up by an affectionate father, even if I can't be as filial as I should, at least I want to accompany you to the other world and be with you on the raft over Sanzu River.¹ Despite my having such ardent feelings, to be commanded to escape and survive is to consign me to a wretched and gloomy existence. If I do not disobey your command, please understand that it is hard for me to accept it." Her deepest affection was revealed in this phrase, and his stalwart mind was bewildered.

Turning his face aside, Tadakuni said in admonition, "Choosing death is a child's sincere faithfulness, while trying to save from death is a father's mercy. Whatever is born of Heaven and Earth, whatever partakes of life in this world, caring for offspring or longing for parents are no different for the fowls of the air or the beasts of the earth, and even when the four young birds of Mount Huan left the nest, there was sorrow at parting.² Especially for me, since you are my only child, I have protected you from the cruel winds of the world despite my advanced years, and now that you are an adult—probably as karma from a former life—unexpectedly a young master from the Minamotos vied for your hand and fulfilled your expectations. But there is no way to escape the principle of 'all that prospers will inevitably decline.'³ To take charge of a large army

¹ The Buddhist equivalent of the river Styx.

² This alludes to a passage in the *Kongzi jiayu* (*School Sayings of Confucius*) where upon hearing the cry of a bird on Mount Huan, Confucius explained to his disciple Yan Hui that it was the mother's sorrow at the departure of her nestlings.

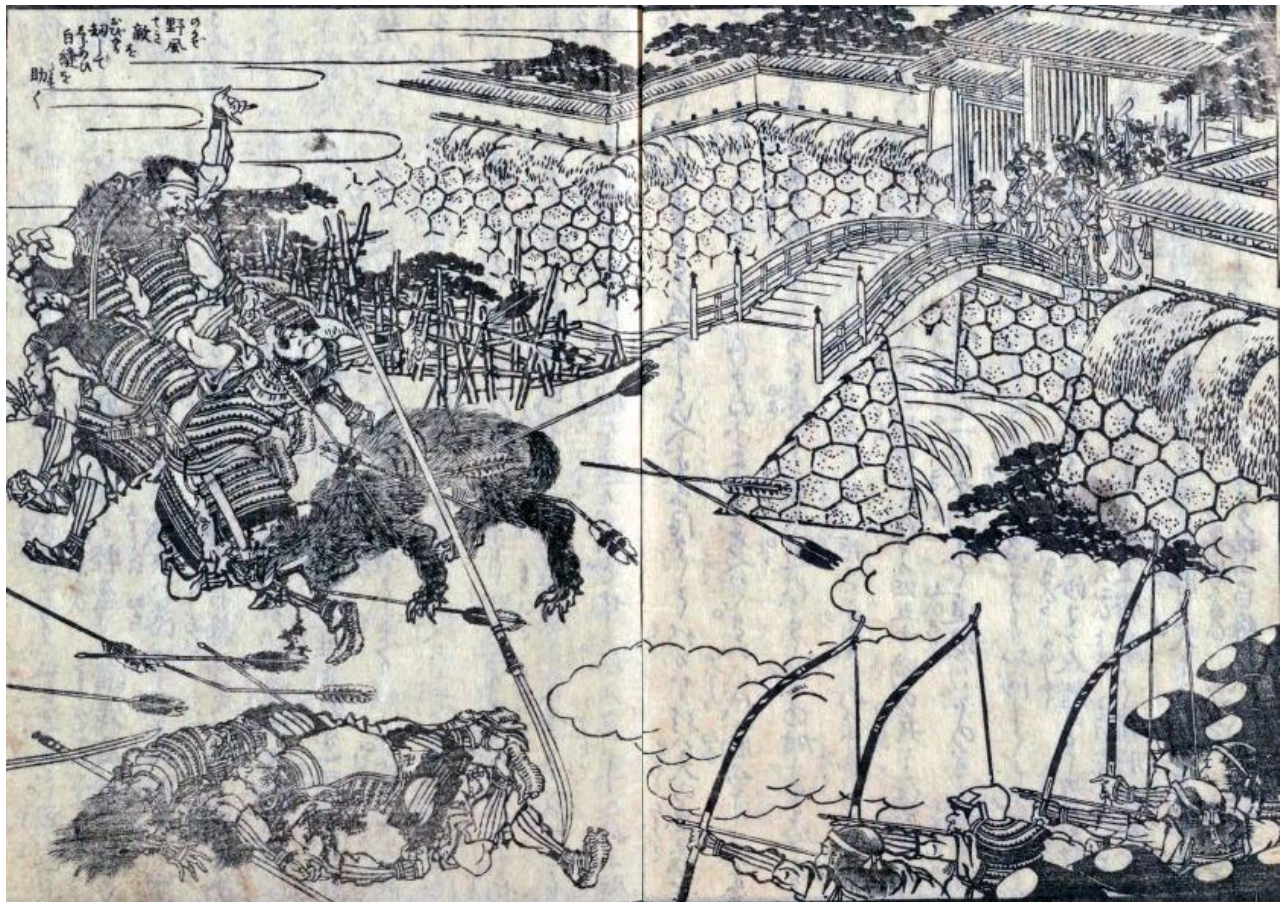
³ 盛者必衰, a Buddhist concept articulated in the *Ren wang jing* (*Humane King Sutra*) and famously cited in the opening lines of *The Tale of the Heike*.

and leave corpses exposed on a battlefield is the usual course of things for a warrior, and is not something he needs to regret. But not to make that distinction and to go against a father's will is gravely unfilial. It is said that the bond between parent and child is for one generation. If you feel any debt of gratitude for my having raised you, you will avoid death, as hard as that might be for you, and will not follow after your father's demise, for that would be quite senseless."

Just at that moment battle cries and the whizzing of arrows sounded ever closer. With several arrows piercing his armor, Takama no Shirō bent over, fresh blood dying the black leather bindings of his breastplate bright crimson, and came running up to the eaves of the building. "The enemy forces have already penetrated the second gate, and Yoshida Hyōe has been wounded. While I am covering for him with my arrows, he wishes to commit *seppuku* immediately." With that, he quickly ran back to face the enemy. With a smile, Aso no Kunitada impatiently ordered, "This, then, will be the final battle, and I'll gladly cut my stomach open. Bring that horse here!" Nimbly leaping from the veranda onto his mount, he took the reins and, wheeling the horse around, dashed off. Shiranui was about to follow after him, but Yatsushiro caught her by the sleeve and remonstrated with her, saying, "When I think that my husband Kiheiji has likely also been slain in the capital, I feel that there is no point in going on living. But the fact that I persevere in life is because I think that out of loyalty to my husband I ought to make sure of a good outcome for you. So please put my anxious mind at ease and relieve your father's worry. As difficult as it may be to escape, let me take you away." After remonstrating with her and broaching no protest, Yatsushiro took her in her arms and set her on a horse. Then taking hold of the reins, she led the horse and escaped through the west gate. At the head of forty or fifty warriors who had not fallen, Tadakuni went into battle all bloodied and was finally able to push the assailants back to the first gate. But having sustained many deep wounds, he retreated to his original position and was very pleased to see that Shiranui was not there, having apparently escaped. Summoning Takama no Shirō, he said, "Be my second, and to make sure that the enemy does not get my head, throw it immediately into a fire." No sooner had he spoken than he loosened his belt, took off his armor, and cut his stomach open. Takama cut off his lord's head, then setting the mansion ablaze, charged into the billowing smoke and was soon reduced to ashes.

At that same time, leading Yatsushiro and twenty or so maids, Shiranui hurriedly exited from the west gate, to which the assailants had also advanced. The star ornaments on their

helmets glistening in the darkness were like white plum blossoms blooming overhead with delicate florets shining on the wall by the garden. Upon seeing the gate open, the enemy soldiers said, “Look, warriors are escaping from the fortress. Let’s strike!” Just as they were rushing toward the gate, the wolf Nokaze that Tametomo had tamed bolted out of the gate ahead of Shiranui, rushing toward the advancing soldiers, biting them at random and bringing them to the ground. With lacerated shins and twisted shoulders and backs the enemy forces fell into chaos, running back and forth. Shiranui, Yatsushiro and the other women brandished swords and *naginata*, shouting a battle cry as they rushed out and, slashing to one side and knocking down on the other they finally opened a means of escape, running toward the southeast. Wishing to facilitate its mistress’s escape, the wolf remained on the spot, circling about and jumping up



without fear of arrows and not evading swords, biting both horses and warriors and kicking sand into their eyes, forcing them into retreat. The assailants were able only to shoot from a distance. Nokaze’s valor notwithstanding, he was not made of metal or stone, and with more that twenty arrows penetrating his flesh he was finally brought to a halt. Letting out a great howl, he gave up

the ghost. Oh, how strange, how heartrending, that wild beasts should be tamed by man to the point that at a single word they should feel a sense of obligation, and that both should in the same manner give up their lives to save their masters. Such acts are rare even in humans. After the battle had ended, having heard reports of Nokaze, Kikuchi the governor of Higo was deeply moved and, telling his soldiers to look to that wolf as a model of devotion, used its hide for a battle drum. This drum was kept by the Kikuchi clan as a prized possession and even down to the time of Jakua⁴ and Takeshige⁵ during the Kenmu era [1333-1336] was often used.

Returning to our account, Shiranui was able to make it through the chaos, but her numerous maids were scattered in various places and she was accompanied only by Yatsushiro. It was about the time the moon of the twenty-third should rise over the mountains, but the sky was clouded over and it had begun to drizzle. On the dark path, a dozen or so warriors on horseback charged toward them carrying torches. Alternately fighting and retreating, when Shiranui had fled to a distance of over half a mile and looked back, she called continuously to Yatsushiro, assuming that she was coming from behind, but there was no reply. “How regrettable if she has fallen and only I remain alive,” she said to herself as she turned her horse back only to see that the castle was ablaze, with flames at the western gate licking the sky. With tears streaming down her face she cried, “All is lost! My father has been slain, and the time for me to die has come. How wretched for me to make a half-hearted escape and delay my demise in this manner! Now, off to the finish!” By the light of the conflagration, she hastened back along the same path. At that time, in order to facilitate Shiranui’s escape, Yatsushiro had secretly gone back to engage the enemy, wounding three and cutting down two others. She took their heads and just as she was getting up an arrow pierced her throat and she fell to the ground. Then four or five enemy soldiers dismounted and vied with each other to take her head. Seeing this from a distance, Shiranui pounded her horse with the stirrups to charge into the fracas, brandishing her *naginata* like a turbine and immediately scattering them to the ground. Unable to withstand her resolute boldness, all looked up in terrified amazement, but then shouted, “This must be Tametomo’s

⁴ Priestly name of Kikuchi Taketoki (1292-1333), a general loyal to Emperor Go-Daigo (1288-1339; r. 1318-1339) during the latter’s rebellion against the authority of the Northern Court.

⁵ Kikuchi Takeshige (1307-1338), eldest son of Taketoki.



wife, said to be more manly than the manliest warrior. But no matter how bold she may be, she has no retainers following after her, so just shoot her down!” Then dispersing in various directions, seven or eight mounted soldiers shot from the shadows of trees and from hilltops. Struck by arrows in its belly, her horse fell over like the tipping of a folding screen, its rider hitting the ground along with it and tumbling head over heels. Gleeful at having shot her down, they cast their bows and arrows aside and dashed up to her with their swords drawn. Alas, just as it appeared that Shiranui would be struck down, from out of a bamboo thicket a hailstorm of stones was directed at three of the soldiers, killing them on the spot. The several remaining ones, faint-hearted rank-and-file underlings, seeing that she had support, all fled in every direction. Struggling to her feet, Shiranui was about to pursue them when a voice called out, “Hello, ma’am,” and a giant of a man wearing a sedge hat and straw raincoat dashed from out of the thicket. He took off his hat and approached. It was none other than Half-mile Stone-throwing Kiheiji. Wiping away the tears prompted by such an unexpected surprise, Shiranui said, “Well, if it isn’t Kiheiji! Is my husband alright? Our residence was attacked by the Kikuchi and Harada

clans, and I think that not only my father but also Takama and Yoshida have been slain, and my fate was to come later. But what I am really worried about is the young master.”

Coming up beside her, Kiheiji related things from beginning to end. “Let your mind be at ease. Although the past eleven days have seen no advantage to our side in the conflict and most of our allied forces have been killed, the young master has not sustained even the slightest injury. When I escaped to Ōmi and was staying in the mountains of Shirakawa, I received a command and had no choice but to leave that place. Travelling both night and day I hurried here, arriving just this evening. I was shocked to see from a distance the castle in flames, and quickened my pace. Then I found you beset by so many enemy soldiers, and seeing what danger you were in, hurled stones at them to rout them. It is my greatest joy to see you unharmed.”

Upon hearing that Tametomo had safely escaped, Shiranui was somewhat relieved and said, “I’m glad that the young master is still in this world. But what deserves to remain alive even more than myself is the brave Nokaze. And especially Yatsushiro.” She proceeded to relate what had happened, weeping profusely. Also blinking back tears, Kiheiji said, “Whether Yamao or Nokaze, both gave their lives for their masters. What karmic bond must they have formed in a previous life? When I think about it, there was certainly something prescient about Nokaze’s attempt to prevent our lord from going up to the capital in the summer of last year. And in exchange for that, though I feel ashamed for having shown up late for the battle this evening, I feel my shame is somewhat offset by the fact that Yatsushiro was able to hold the enemy at bay and die an honorable death.” With that, he picked up a torch abandoned by the enemy and by its light gathered his wife’s remains. An arrow had pierced her throat clear through to the back of her neck. Blood covered his hands and streamed down on the blade of his sword forming a pattern like that of a saw. His hand trembled, and as Shiranui looked on, she added her wailing to his.

Cutting down withered branches of pine and placing them over her body, Kiheiji then took a torch and, invoking the Buddha of the Pure Land, set the pyre ablaze. As the smoke arose, he urged Shiranui, saying “Leave here immediately, before the enemy returns.” Dawn was breaking as they raced toward the bend in the shoreline and were met by her maids fleeing the enemy from here and there. What was even more strange was that they all had their skirts tucked up into their sashes and were wearing sedge hats, assuming the appearance of young men.

Following the flame they knew not whither, they boarded boats leaving Kyushu and rowed toward Shikoku.

Chapter Ten

Tametomo races toward Ōmi alone on horseback,
Recognizing the horse, Tōichi reaches Kitahama.

Having sent Kiheiji back to Kyushu, rootless in the mountains of Shirakawa and like an unmoored boat at the mercy of the waves, Tametomo left the ancient capital in Shiga¹ behind, fleeing to the north of Lake Biwa. It was the first day of the seventh month, so it was unbearably hot in midday, but in the evening as he passed by the inlet of Mano where quails were crying,² his robe flapping in the autumn wind that had set the pampas grass waving, when he had just passed Nakahama and made it as far as Kitahama,³ it was already deep into the night. Since there was no lodging to be had, he thought he would just rest under trees or in the clefts of huge rocks, but seeing an ancient shrine by the side of the path he dismounted and, sitting on the altar, spoke to his horse, “Well now, you’ve had a hard time of it, haven’t you? If the New Cloistered Emperor had won the battle, both my father and I would have been enfeoffed with many lands, and you too would have been ennobled with a jeweled saddle and a golden bit. But now you’re just giving a ride to a fugitive, and you must think that very wearying. I give you your freedom now. Go wherever you like, and seek a benevolent master.” Then with the bow in his hand he struck the horse’s rump. It shuddered, then galloped off toward Kitahama.

Tametomo did not enter the shrine. The whereabouts of his father, the fate of his brothers, the wife he had left behind in Dazaifu—such thoughts weighed on him, and bowing to the deity he offered a prayer and wondered whose souls might be embodied in the fireflies flitting about near the eaves.⁴

¹ Ōtsu no miya in Ōmi province was the site of Emperor Tenchi’s (626-672; r. 668-672) palace.

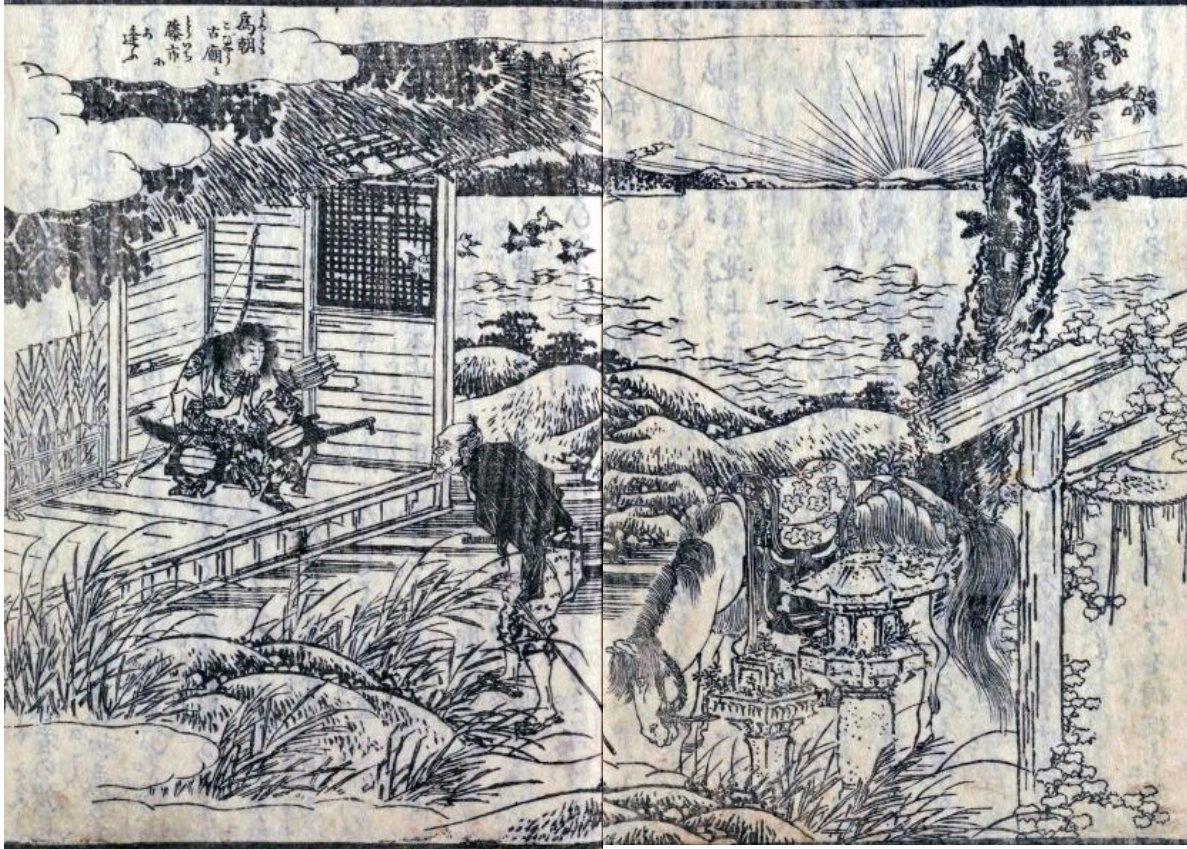
² This alludes to a famous verse appearing in the *Kin’yō wakashū* no. 254:

Uzura naku Mano no irie no hamakaze ni obana nami yoru aki no yūgure
Breezes of the beach of Mano inlet where quails are crying,
waves of pampas grass—twilight in autumn.

³ Lake Biwa’s western shore includes Minamihama (South Beach), Nakahama (Middle Beach), and Kitahama (North Beach).

⁴ A possible allusion to a famous verse by Izumi Shikibu (976-1030):

Mono omoeba sawa no hotaru mo waga mi yori akugareizuru tama ka to zo miru
Lost in thought—the flicker of fireflies over the marsh
appear to me as my wandering spirit.



At the sound of waves beating on the shore or

breezes blowing through the pines he would prick up his ears wondering if the enemy was advancing, and as day broke after a night of sleepless dreaming he heard the distant sound of a horse's bridle. "Strange! Did my horse come back?" As he opened the lattice door and looked out he saw a man over sixty years in age approaching, leading the horse. Looking at Tametomo intently, the old man asked, "Aren't you the young master in Kyushu, Lord Hachirō?" Thinking that he had seen this man somewhere before, Tametomo did not conceal his identity. "Just as you say, I am Hachirō Tametomo. And who are you?"

The man bowed touching his head to the ground. "I'm sure you don't remember the likes of me, but I am Tōichi, stable master in the employ of Lord Tameyoshi. Ten years ago he allowed me to retire, and since I am originally from Ōmi, I have since been living in a cottage north of the Ara river at the foot of Mount Hira. I was making my living by hunting, but at my age that is difficult, so now I purchase the hides of animals that others have hunted and take them to tanners. However, having heard reports that the forces allied with the New Cloistered Emperor were defeated in battle and that Lord Tameyoshi and numerous young lords fled and their whereabouts is unknown, at such a time even such a lowly person as I should show some

resolve. Since I thought that they might come near my village, I stayed awake all night, unable to sleep. The next morning when I arose weary of waiting, this horse ran to my gate, neighing incessantly. I thought it must be the stray horse of a fleeing warrior, and upon inspecting it closely I recognized the Chinese saddle that had been the prized possession of Lord Tameyoshi, so I realized that one of his sons must have taken refuge in this area and was perhaps slain by mountain brigands. I was alarmed, and set out to find the remains for a proper burial, but I had no idea which direction this horse had come from. But having worked long as a stable master I understood the minds of horses, that they do not forget the way they have come. So I decided to let it walk in front of me in whatever direction it would, and it came to this shrine and stopped. Then when I saw you looking out from inside the shrine, I recognized the countenance of Lord Hachirō, whom I had known as a child so long ago, and knew that it was the young master.” Hearing the story from beginning to end, Tametomo was extremely pleased, and said, “So then, you’re Tōichi! My father gave me this saddle and told me to use it in battle this time, and most unexpectedly it became a mark of identification for you. The bond between master and servant is never exhausted.” When he related that he knew nothing of his father’s whereabouts and how he had freed the horse to go on its own, Tōichi was overjoyed and yet wept at the same time, saying, “At any rate, hide in my house.” Tametomo answered, “It would not do for me to refuse your kindness. I’ll stay in your house for a while as I secretly look for my father. How strange it is, though, that this horse led you to me. This was no doubt divine aid. So then, what deity is enshrined here?” As he spoke, he glanced up and saw in the brightening of dawn the framed characters: Hachiman Shrine. “No doubt about it, a shrine for the tutelary deity⁵ of our clan is now a landmark. And thus it led the horse to this wayside shrine without a proper priest. It’s absurd not to make an offering of a living thing. Let’s offer this to Man Mountain.”⁶ After four or five days, Tōichi led the horse to the Hachiman Shrine and, leaving the saddle on it, made an offering of it, secretly praying for his lord’s success in battle. The next day, he returned to the Ara river.

⁵ The god Hachiman had been the tutelary deity of the Minamotos since the time of Minamoto no Yoshiie (1039-1106), who was also known as Hachiman Tarō.

⁶ *Otokoyama*, the location of the shrine and a moniker for the deity Hachiman.

Chapter Eleven

By Bog Myrtle Falls, the young master slays a demon,
At the Ishiyama hot springs, Butōta betrays his master.

Moved by Tōichi's devotion, Tametomo followed him to the Ara river that day. Deep in the ravine of a mountain, it was a perfect place for hiding. After discussing it he concluded, "I'll remain here until I've discovered the whereabouts of my father and brothers, and after that come up with a plan." Being single, Tōichi led a free and easy life, and when his work permitted he would go to Ōtsu or Sakamoto where he would try to catch up on the latest news. But when the end of the seventh month came, he had still not heard anything definite.

One day, when he set out for Nakahama, he came running back in a flurry and said to Tametomo, "This evening I heard where Master Tameyoshi is." Before he could even finish speaking, tears trickled down his face. Alarmed, Tametomo asked, "Oh no! Has my father been taken captive?" For a time, Tōichi was unable to answer, but after being repeatedly questioned, he wiped the tears from his eyes and said, "From what people have told me, when they were defeated in battle some days ago the Minister of the Left, Lord Yorinaga, was struck in the neck by a stray arrow and perished, while the New Cloistered Emperor, attended by Lord Tameyoshi, Mitsuhiro,¹ Sueyoshi,² and only seven or so horsemen, went to Mount Nyoï. There, he kept only Mitsuhiro and Sueyoshi with him and, dismissing all the others, entered the temple known as Chisokuin where some odd priest shaved his head. But in the end he was found and sent to Matsuyama in the province of Sanuki. Lord Tameyoshi and five of his sons decided to flee to the eastern provinces, but he suddenly succumbed to an illness and so that plan was abandoned. Thinking that this was the end, they donned dark robes and proceeded to the mansion of the eldest son Yoshitomo, where his five exhausted sons—Yorikata, Yorinaka, Tamemune, Tamenari, and Tamenaka—had been apprehended. Then the lay monk Junior Counselor Shinzei, intending to do away with Tameyoshi and his sons, conspired with Kiyomori, who had beheaded his uncle Hei Manosuke Tadamasa³ after his surrendering as an ally with the New Cloistered Emperor. Kiyomori's intention was to persuade Yoshitomo that, since he had executed his own uncle for

¹ Taira no Mitsuhiro, son of Taira no Iehiro (d. 1156).

² Minamoto no Sueyoshi, son of Minamoto no Suenori (d. 1156).

³ Son of Taira no Masamori (d. 1121).

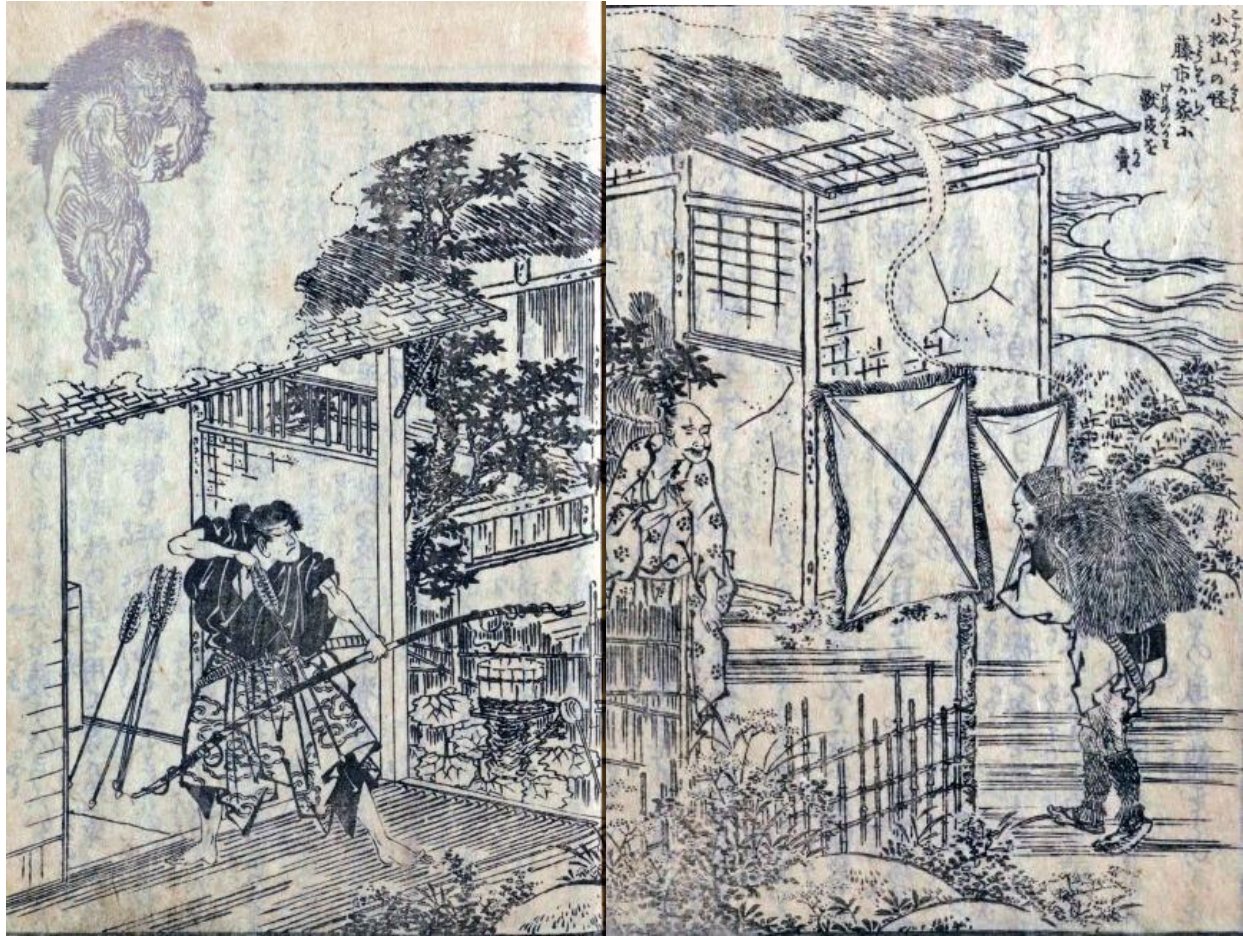
the sake of the sovereign, Yoshitomo should do the same to his father. In response, Yoshitomo agreed to have his five brothers—those beneath his father, Tameyoshi—put to death, but his petition to spare his father was rejected. Heartrending as it was, Lord Tameyoshi along with Yoshitomo's five brothers were beheaded on Mount Funaoka. In addition, three boys were also executed.⁴ When their mother, who was returning from a pilgrimage to the Yahata Shrine, heard of it, she was so overcome by grief that she threw herself into the Katsura River at Gojō.

Before he had finished speaking, Tametomo's tears were flowing like a fountain. "Alas, my parents and brothers now belong to the netherworld, and what should I do, being left alone? My father's enemy is my brother Yoshitomo. Not long ago at the battle of Nijō Kawara, I shot a single arrow at him, but thinking that killing one's own brother would be an act worthy only of a beast, I just shot the star off his helmet and let him escape. Had I known things would turn out like this, I'd have shot him clear through the chest. But there's no use regretting that now. I ought to go to the capital at once, twist the heads off both Yoshitomo and Shinzei, stomp them to pieces and slash them as much as a blade is able!" Tametomo shouted menacingly, apparently working himself into a frenzy. "Master, this is not at all like you. Even if you manage to strike down those two, how would that amount to a filial observance toward your late father?" Thus reproving him in various ways, Tōichi was able to draw him into deep reflection.

After some consideration, Tametomo firmly decided, "When I was in Kyushu, I had already won over the hearts of the people of all nine provinces. I should just return to Dazaifu, again take lead of the provinces, free the New Cloistered Emperor and return him to the throne. I shall be the redeemer of all of Japan! Upon inquiring about conditions in Dazaifu he was told that the Kikuchi and Harada clans had attacked the castle, that his father-in-law Tadakuni had been slain, and that Shiranui had perished in the conflagration. He was beside himself with growing rage, and yet having lost all who had supported him, felt like a man with limbs or a bird without wings. Finding it impossible to take any immediate action, he reluctantly spent his days without aim.

During that time there was a man, appearing to be over fifty years of age, who came every evening to Tōichi's house to sell pelts. Every time he came, the string on Tametomo's bow would break. Finding this strange, one day he mentioned it to Tōichi and asked, "Where is that

⁴ *Sankō Hōgen monogatari* names four boys who were put to death: Otsuwaka, 13 years old; Kamewaka, 11 years old; Tsuruwaka, 9 years old; Ten'ō, 7 years old.



man from?” Tōichi answered, “I myself am not certain, but he said that he lives by Mount Koyama, north of here. Since this past spring he has come here to sell pelts, but I have no idea how he hunts the animals, because the hides never show any trace of being pierced by arrows. Since the pelts are quite flawless they fetch a good price on the market, I don’t haggle with him over the cost but just pay what he asks. He then takes the money and leaves.” Upon hearing that, Tametomo said, “That’s very odd. Every time he comes here my bowstring breaks, and that’s already happened several times. My bow is a very strong one, and its string is thick, so it has never broken by itself. Next time he comes, I’ll test him with a *hikime* arrowhead.”⁵ Hearing of this, in spite of himself Tōichi’s hair stood on end, and after some time had passed he said, “Now that I think about it, there were indeed strange things about him. About the *hikime* that you mentioned, why is it written with the character for ‘toad’ (*hiki*)?” Tametomo replied, “The name of the *hikime* arrowhead comes from the fact that its whistling, turnip shape has eyes carved into

⁵ A large, harmless turnip-shaped arrowhead made of magnolia wood, often shot to ward off evil spirits.

it on four sides that are fashioned to resemble toad eyes. Thus, it is called *hikime* (toad eye). The toad is a representative *yin* creature, dwelling also in the moon.⁶ And for that reason, ghosts and goblins fear it. Moreover, the crescent shape of a bow is likened to the moon. With its string, it is a half-moon, and when an arrow is inserted and pulled taut, it appears like a full moon. After the arrow is released, it is like the moon at dawn in its waning phase. And so, the thirty days of a month are clearly likened to a bow, which possesses the virtues of outer and inner, as well as *yin* and *yang* in its imitation of sun and moon.⁷ Whether the twenty-eight mansions of Heaven⁸ or the thirty-six beasts of earth,⁹ all bear this essential nature (*ki*). When only twanging the bowstring without releasing an arrow, a bow of unfinished wood is always used. When a boy is born, arrows with *hikime* arrowheads using a bow of mulberry wood and arrow shafts of wormwood for unadulterated *yang* are shot in four directions to ward off demons.¹⁰ Look, tomorrow this will definitely reveal him as a demon.” Hearing this, Tōichi was deeply impressed and waited all evening.

Thus, having prepared to use the *hikime* the following day, Tametomo awaited the arrival of the man in question. Toward dusk on that autumn day as temple bells were resounding and the sun was about to sink behind the mountains, the man appeared carrying as usual two or three animal pelts on his back. As he approached Tōichi’s house and drew near to the gate, he cast his gaze upward for some time and chortled derisively without entering. He turned on his heels and ran away down the same path. In an instant Tametomo realized, “That is for sure a goblin. I mustn’t let him get away!” Taking up his bow and arrow, he went in pursuit. Though the man’s flight was calm and quiet, he ran with the speed of a galloping horse, and in spite of Tametomo’s swiftness, he was unable to draw closer. After passing the foot of Mount Hira, by the side of Yamamomo Falls between northern and southern Komatsu, he lost sight of the man. How

⁶ This alludes to an ancient Chinese legend which says that toads live on the moon, which is traditionally associated with *yin*.

⁷ This description of both the *hikime* arrowhead and the bow is a close paraphrase of what is found in chapter 2 of *Buke koji yōgen*.

⁸ In ancient Chinese astronomy, constellations were seen as dividing the ecliptic into twenty-eight positions.

⁹ These were said to be positioned in east-west-north-south locations.

¹⁰ This was also an ancient Chinese practice, described in *The Book of Rites (Li ji)*.



vexing! He could not be far away, and must be hiding somewhere. Thinking that the man's abode must be in the vicinity, he searched here and there, and noticed that there was a level area to the right of the waterfall where an old nettle tree was covered with lush foliage. Thinking that the man might be hiding in the tree, Tametomo parted the sedge to approach it, whereupon with furious suddenness the man appeared in front of the tree carrying a short bow and releasing an arrow aimed directly at the young master's face. Tametomo turned his back to dodge it, but the arrow lodged squarely in his shoulder. He did not leave it there, but pulled it out and threw it away. In order to change his aim, in a state of great agitation the man tried to fix a second arrow to his bowstring, but before he could do so, Tametomo made four shots, crushing the man's sternum and going clear through him to strike the trunk of the nettle tree, making it quiver. And yet the man still did not die, but flailing with his arms and legs attempted to escape. Seeing this, Tametomo tossed his bow and arrows aside, drew his sword and, running up to the man, cut off his head. Immediately the mountain thundered, the waterfall gushed, and a wind suddenly arose, stirring up fallen leaves and sand, for a time obscuring the surroundings and leaving everything indistinct.

Just then, worried about the young master, Tōichi came following after him, lighting the way with a torch. After the wind had died down somewhat, he came running up and was shocked by what he saw. He asked what had happened, and Tametomo told him in detail about how he shot this demon. Hearing this, Tōichi fearfully held the torch up and both of them looked closely. What they had thought to be a man in his fifties was a beast three yards in length with patches of needle-like hair, with hands and feet pitch-black as if they had been lacquered, and claws nearly six inches long. Its head, somewhat like but also unlike that of an ape, was some distance away and was biting a crag on the right. Its hair, white as snow, was a yard in length, its lips were thick, covering its nose, and in its opened mouth were sharp fangs. Though it was dead its eyes were still open and a piercing glow was in their pupils, as if it were still alive. Tametomo asked, “What kind of creature is this?” Tōichi replied, “I once spent many years hunting in these mountains, but have never seen the likes of this beast. It must be what is known as a ‘mountain man’ (*yamaotoko*).” “Yes, that must be it. Let’s check out where it was living.” He and Tōichi went behind the nettle tree and found a cave large enough to accommodate a person. They went inside and saw that it was only eight feet or so in depth, but was full of piles of animal bones. Rusted coins were strewn about, and those on the ground were corroded. Tametomo ordered Tōichi to take the coins outside, saying, “This demon hunted animals, devoured their flesh, and took their hides to you to sell. The reason the hides had no cuts from arrows is that this demon never failed to shoot them in their eyes. I know that because the arrow that he shot at me was aimed at my face, and would have struck the eye of an ordinary person. What are his bow and arrows made of?” Tōichi replied, “I’ll check that out.” Upon gathering up the bow and arrows and inspecting them, they saw that the bow was made of the trunk of a wax tree overlaid with bamboo and wound about with wisteria vines. The arrows appeared to have been fashioned by whittling the bones of animals. Tametomo ordered, “Burn all of these things.” Tōichi gathered up everything including the demon’s head and, covering it with brushwood, set it ablaze. Tearing the skin off the corpse, he wrapped the coins in it, binding it with wisteria vines and carrying it on his back. “This is an unexpected gain,” he said with a smile. Tametomo laughed, “You shouldn’t tell anyone about this. If word gets out that I easily slew a demon, I’ll come under suspicion, and it could end up bad for me. Please, keep this a secret.” Tōichi consented with a nod, and they set out together to his house.

That evening, Tametomo's wound suddenly began to hurt, and since he appeared to be in agony, Tōichi was alarmed. He washed the wound and expunged toxins, then applied a salve, but an immediate cure remained unlikely. Tōichi suggested that with a trip to the hot springs in Ishiyama, a wound like that would heal in a matter of days. Tametomo said that after the illness abated somewhat, he would go there to recuperate.

Tōichi had a nephew named Butōta who had lost both parents at a tender age and whom Tōichi had brought up as his own child. Tōichi had sent him to serve a wealthy family near the inlet at Katada,¹¹ but more than three years previously he had pilfered a lot of his master's money and spent it all on wine and women. When that came to light his master was enraged, immediately returning him to Tōichi's charge and demanding that the money be returned quickly, saying, "If you neglect to do so, I'll appeal to the magistrate, and not only Butōta, but you also will have a bitter experience." Put to great trouble by all of this, Tōichi barely managed to pay the money back, after which he summarily disowned Butōta and sent him away. After that, Butōta loitered about in Kyoto and Naniwa,¹² making friends with unwholesome types, gambling, and indulging his taste for saké. When he had money he would spend it instantly, giving no thought to tomorrow, and when he had none he would borrow with no intention of paying back. Thus he spent his days until not long ago he ran into a losing streak at gambling and his craftiness no longer served him. Shamelessly he made his way back to Arakawa, concealing his circumstances and only bearing an expression of penitence for his past misdeeds, conveying through the village headman his apologies to Tōichi. At first, Tōichi was not inclined to accept the admission of guilt, but upon further reflection, thought, "I am getting on in years and have no offspring. If I should depart from this world, who would be willing to hold observances for me? It is a great blessing that my nephew has reformed his intentions. Not only that, but it would be opportune to have him accompany the young master to the hot spring cure." Reaching such a conclusion, he accepted his nephew's repeated apologies and finally revoked the disownment with a word of warning about his behavior henceforth. Keeping an eye on him, he arose at the crack of dawn and did not retire to his bed until well past midnight. Observing his faithful conduct, Tōichi was somewhat relieved, and shared his thoughts with Tametomo.

¹¹ On the southwest shore of Lake Biwa.

¹² Osaka.

One day he mentioned to Butōta, “The man who has been staying in my house, is the son of one to whom I owe a debt of gratitude from my youth. While on his way to Kaga province on an errand, he fell ill and came to my house where he has been recovering for a time. He’ll be going to the hot springs at Ishiyama, which I think is a good idea. My occupation allows me no time to accompany him. You go with him in my stead, and be conscientious in tending to his needs.” Butōta responded without hesitation, “Yes, I shall go.” By this time, Tametomo’s wound had healed somewhat and he was able to walk without difficulty. The next day, leading Butōta he set out for Ishiyama for a seven-day hot spring cure, thinking that the hot water would be good for his full recuperation.

Even after arriving at the hot springs Butōta continued to serve faithfully, but at the same time secretly thought about what he had heard during his time in Kyoto of Chinzei Hachirō Tametomo, that anyone able to capture and deliver him would be handsomely rewarded. Looking at Tametomo’s frame, he saw that he was over seven feet tall, and that his mien and spirit were not that of an ordinary person. And considering his mannerisms, they were far from those of a peasant or merchant. Moreover, he knew that this man was the son of one to whom his uncle was once very obliged, and he saw how his uncle treated him obsequiously. In light of these factors, it was obvious that this man was none other than Tametomo. With a note of glee Butōta thought, “If I bring an accusation against him and receive a reward, I’ll be rich enough to do as I please.” But he had no way to be absolutely certain, and if he moved against the wrong person, he would only end up exposing his own delinquency. For a time, he wavered, uncertain about whether or not to make a move. Finally he came up with an idea: he would see when Tametomo was in the bath, go up to the side of the tub, and say, “I’ve heard that when people undergoing hot spring cures are massaged, their muscles come into harmony, and that the effect is immediate. So you ought to have your neck and shoulders massaged, and then have the filth washed away.” Unaware of Butōta’s intentions, Tametomo was pleased with his diligence and consented. As Butōta massaged Tametomo’s shoulders, he smiled to himself. He had heard that Tametomo’s ability to draw from a bundle of arrows owed to the fact that his right arm was more than four



inches longer than his left. As he massaged him, he looked carefully at his elbows and saw that it was indeed so. What further proof did he need? But he did not let his determination show in his countenance. The next morning he said to Tametomo, “Last night I saw in a dream that my uncle Tōichi has fallen ill, and I am worried about him. I’m going to return to Arakawa and check on him, and then come back.” He sounded so sincere that Tametomo remained unaware of the deception, and responded, “That’s right of you to worry about the elderly adoptive father left home alone. Go right away, and don’t be in a hurry to come back here.” Pleased to hear that, Butōta rushed directly to the mansion of the domain lord Sado no Hyōenōjō Shigesada¹³ and brought an accusation against Tametomo.

Upon hearing Butōta’s report, Shigetada assembled his own retainers as well as three hundred local warriors. Led by Butōta, they surrounded the bathhouse. They selected from among them fifteen powerful men. Making sure to leave their swords behind, they stealthily entered together with Butōta. At that time Tametomo was in the tub. Butōta stepped forth and announced, “I’m back,” whereupon Tametomo responded, “That’s sooner than I expected.” Just as he was getting out of the tub ten men, banding together, crowded around him. Tametomo looked at them and immediately grabbed three, choking them and casting them aside. The remaining seven crowded against him from both sides. In an instant he kicked two of them to death, and when the others charged him he shoved them into the tub, twisting their heads off,

¹³ Also known as Minamoto no Shigesada, the fourth son of Minamoto no Shigezane. For his role in capturing Tametomo, Shigesada was appointed *Uemon no shōi*.

striking them down with his fists, or trampling them. When he stopped to take a breath and stood up, the water in the tub had been dyed red and corpses were strewn about. By then Tametomo realized that Butōta was the informer and, his rage mounting, started at him, shouting, “I’m not going to let the one who sold me out get away!” Scared out of his wits, Butōta locked the door to the bathhouse and yelled, “He’s invincible! Set the place on fire and burn him to death!”

Tametomo then roused himself to action and proceeded to demolish the bathhouse, easily pulling up a pillar and chasing after Butōta, intending to club him with it. But he was immediately beset by Shigesada’s retainers, who were lying in wait and who vied with each other to take him on. Treating the assault as if it were nothing, Tametomo brandished the pillar, striking down many in all directions. But his wound from the arrow had not yet healed and the timing was inopportune for him. After a time, the strength of his arms waned, his vigor reached its limit, and he suddenly collapsed. A throng of captors set upon him, grappling with him and beating him. Though lying on the ground, he tried to return their blows and kick them, but the strength of a weakened one is no match for the combined force of many, and he ended up being taken alive.

All told, in taking Tametomo captive that day, more than thirty men were killed and another fifty or sixty were injured. Moreover, there is no way to tell how many people—old or young, men or women—who were there for a hot spring cure might have been trampled to death as they fled in alarm. Shigesada was greatly pleased that he had taken Tametomo captive and, anticipating fame and honor if he presented him to the imperial court, turned him over to the magistrate of Suō Sueyoshi¹⁴ to arrange to present him to the emperor. He was dressed in white hunting trousers and a red tunic with a comb of unfinished wood inserted into his topknot. Retired Emperor Goshirakawa inspected him at the north gate of the palace, where he, along with all of the nobles, were amazed at his appearance. They whispered such things among them as, “Truly, this Tametomo is no ordinary person. With his height, his burly physique, and his double pupils, he could be called the Xiang Yu¹⁵ of our land. If he had not been suffering from an unhealed arrow wound, it would not have been easy to take him captive even with a force of millions of mounted warriors.” Without a hint of cravenness in his expression, Tametomo maintained his composure. For the meritorious deed of capturing him, Shigesada was appointed to the exalted rank of Lieutenant of the Left Guard.

¹⁴ In *Hōgen monogatari*, the magistrate in question appears as [Minamoto no] Sueyoshi (d. 1160).

¹⁵ 232-202 BCE, King of Western Chu who led the Chu forces to victory.

Chapter Twelve

Butōta meets a beautiful woman at Kotohiki Shrine,
At Kannonji Village Shiranui kills her enemy.

And so Tametomo was handed over to the Office of the Police and Judicial Chief, where he was interrogated about his role in the insurrection. But he would only answer, “What shall I say? Take my head and be quick about it,” all the while maintaining gallant composure. The nobles then convened a council to address the question of whether he should be executed or exiled. While they were finding it difficult to decide, the lay monk Junior Counselor Shinzei came forth to the front and said without hesitation, “It was because of Tametomo alone that so many of our warriors lost their lives in that battle. He is guilty of the most serious crimes. Not only that, but he set fire to the Takamatsu Palace, which belongs to the imperial court, and swore that he would shoot an arrow into the imperial palace, which is tantamount to shooting at his majesty. He deserves no leniency, and it is obvious that he should be executed.” But in response the Chief Advisor to the emperor, Tadamichi,¹ reasoned, “Though Tametomo’s crimes are indeed serious, the fact that he took flight alone from the battle scene and has remained alive until now could truly be said to be the fate of Heaven, thus making him undeserving of execution. Moreover, his skill with bow and arrow is without equal either among the ancients or among our contemporaries. If we summarily put such an outstanding warrior to death, we’ll only invite the scorn of later generations. On the other hand, if he shows contrition for his past crimes and turns away from his rebellious intentions, he could become a valued asset to his majesty.” Following this line of argumentation, various officials added, “That is very well put. Let’s banish him to a remote island.” It was decided that he should be sent to Ōshima, off the coast of Izu. Hearing of this, Shinzei found the Council’s decision regrettable, but could not very well contradict the Chief Advisor, so he said in jest, “Then you should just tell Yoshitomo about this, and have his shoulder dislocated so that he won’t be able to pull a bowstring again.” But he still no doubt felt uneasy about it and said to Chief Advisor Tadamichi, “Though Tametomo’s shoulder is already dislocated, we cannot be negligent. It’s impossible to say what might happen either enroute or what he might do after arriving there. We should call on a prominent man of Izu, Kano no Kudō

¹ Fujiwara no Tadamichi (1097-1164), sided with Go-Shirakawa, while his brother, Fujiwara no Yorinaga (1120-1156), allied himself with Sutoku.

Mochimitsu,² to enlist his retainers to keep close watch over him.” This sounded very sincere, and the Chief Advisor conceded and called on Mochimitsu.

At that time, Butōta did not return to Arakawa, but went to Kyoto in the company of one of Shigesada’s retainers to ask about his due reward. As he was staying at an inn while looking into the matter, he heard that Tametomo had been banished to a distant island. One day, he went to Shigesada and pleaded, “I am no longer associated with my adoptive father Tōichi. I can claim the great merit of handily taking Tametomo alive as captive. Though my low rank makes me unworthy, I hope I might receive a reward.” Shigesada thought to himself, “This Butōta is completely without loyalty or filial piety, and thinks only of his own advantage. He is a fool without equal in this world, betraying the former master of his adoptive father. Though I find him despicable, if I don’t give him the reward, others will not come forth with accusations against insurrectionists.” And so, he gave him one hundred *kan*³ as a reward. Feeling that was not enough, Butōta muttered, “That Chinzei Hachirō was a matchless warrior who could hold out against ten thousand men, and even famous generals failed to kill him. But I took him alive and presented him. If that had been done by a warrior, he might have been rewarded with a fiefdom, but I have ended up unexpectedly with this pittance!” Overhearing this, Shigesada said, “You loathsome scoundrel! If you think this isn’t enough, then maybe I won’t give you anything!” Seeing Shigesada’s threatening countenance, Butōta was afraid and said no more. He took both the money and his leave, withdrawing as if making an escape. Losing no time, he converted the coinage into gold, which he put in his breast pocket and finally returned to Ōmi. When he arrived in Arakawa, immediately twenty or thirty young men of the area ran up to him with poles in their hands, preventing his passage and reviling him harshly. “How does an idiot like you have the nerve to come back here? You betrayed the young master by reporting him. When Tōichi heard about it, he spent the entire night shedding tears, but that wasn’t enough. The next morning, he tied a rope to a beam and hanged himself. When we heard from people who are familiar with the situation, we learned that the young master was Tōichi’s former lord. Which means that he was

² Kudō Mochimitsu (d. 1180), founding figure of the Kano clan.

³ One *kan* equaled a thousand *mon*, the lowest denomination of currency.

your lord also. And yet you had the gall to report him, have him taken captive, and in addition to all that led your adoptive father to an untimely death. You've committed one of the five cardinal sins along with one of the ten evil deeds.⁴ Men, beat and bind this repulsive creature!" Not allowing Butōta to get a word in, they all vied to take him down. His face changing from red to blue, he ran away like a rat and returned to Kyoto, but everyone there likewise despised his perfidy and lack of filial piety, and because of that no one would give him lodging. Those he met on the street cursed him to his face, and even threw rocks at him and threatened him. Finding it impossible to remain in Kyoto, he headed directly to Osaka.

That was a place where Butōta had formerly knocked about and knew a lot of people, but since it was close to Kyoto, reports of his actions had spread there as well and he met with even greater scorn than in the capital. He had no choice but to go westward, thinking he might find a place where he could be at peace. Afraid that some misfortune might befall him on the road, he tried to secure passage on a boat, but no one would allow him to board. He had no choice, then, but to make his way over land, but on the way ran into two brothers, Jōgo and Jōroku, who were



⁴ In Buddhist teaching, the five cardinal sins include killing one's father, killing one's mother, killing an *arhat*, shedding the blood of a Buddha, causing a schism within the *sangha*. The ten evil deeds include: killing, stealing, sexual misconduct, lying, divisive speech, harsh speech, frivolous speech, greed, hatred, and deviant view.

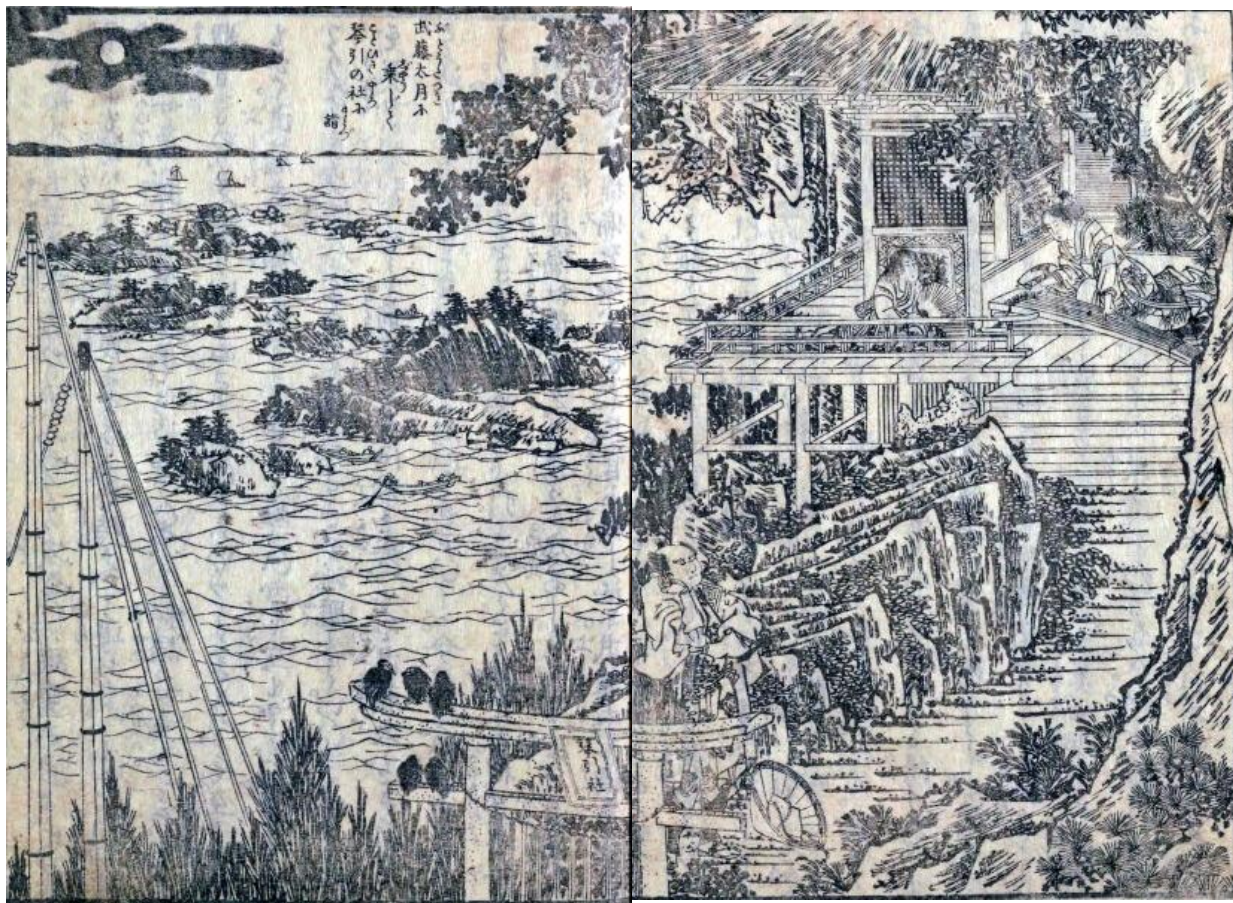
sailors. Since Jōgo and Jōroku were close friends with Butōta when he had lived in Osaka previously, he told them of his plight and gave them three *ryō* of gold⁵ for passage on a boat. Now these two brothers were originally from Kyushu, but had killed a person in their hometown and had escaped to Osaka, where they had been employed as sailors. Since they were profligates with no sense of honor they consented with alacrity, borrowing a boat and treating him cordially. Greatly pleased, Butōta purchased numerous goods that would be regarded as unusual to people in the western provinces and, loading them into the boat, set out that evening. As they headed west, Jōgo and Jōroku asked, “Which port should we go to?” Butōta replied, “I’ve heard that Kyushu is no less lively a place than Kyoto. I want to go there and try my hand at making a living, so please head that way.” Jōgo then advised him saying, “We’re from Kyushu, but certain scruples make it difficult to go there. There are a lot of wealthy people in Akamagaseki in the province of Nagato,⁶ and it would be an ideal port for you to ply your trade. Head for Akama, and set up your business there.” They were moving full sail with fair winds until suddenly the airstreams changed and they came up against heavily surging waves. Further navigation was impossible and they barely managed to make anchorage at Misaki in Sanuki province where they waited for more favorable weather.

Butōta had never yet spent time in Shikoku and wanted to see what the place was like, so he went ashore by himself and spent an entire day wandering here and there. When it started to grow dark he headed back toward the port. Two or three hundred yards from a place called Kannonji Village stood the Kotohiki Hachiman Shrine. The place commanded a fine view, from which the blue of the sea blended with the color of the sky. One could see the provinces of Kibi,⁷ the islands of Shiwaku and Yokoki, and as if bubbling up before one’s very eyes, on the right was the beach of Ariake and on the left, the port at the mouth of a river. Though he could claim no appreciation for song or poetry, it seemed a shame for him to pass by the scene aimlessly, and so he thought to make a pilgrimage on his way and headed for the shrine. By then the sun had already set, but that night was the full moon of the eighth month and the shrine faced south. If the moon were out it would have been very bright, but since the sky had been cloudy since

⁵ One *ryō* was approximately 16.5 grams of gold.

⁶ Akamagaseki was renamed Shimonoseki during the Meiji period. It is in Yamaguchi prefecture.

⁷ Kibi refers to an area encompassing Bizen, Bitchū, Bingo, and Mimasaka provinces.



midday, there was not much to see. Thus, with no other pilgrims, Butōta was by himself as he bowed before the shrine and mumbled, “They say that, looking on the virtues and vices of ordinary people, you, oh Hachiman, make no error in dealing out rewards and punishments, and that there is no limit to the efficacy of your power. Now when I reported Tametomo, an enemy of the realm, and had him taken captive by Sado no Saemon no jō Shigesada, my loyalty was considerable and my merit was obvious. And yet Shigesada was miserly and did not offer a reward worthy of my deed, but kept it back for his own advantage. People have not understood this, and have rather treated me with scorn, as if I were an enemy. Not only in my native province of Ōmi, but also in Kyoto and Osaka they have refused me lodging. And now boarding a boat for passage to the western provinces, I’ve encountered rough winds and have had a hard time of it. Oh Hachiman, if you would have pity on me for my misfortunes, turn this disaster into blessing, and let me find wealth.” Thus, with no thought of his own wrongdoing and full of resentment toward others and the fickleness of the world, he raised his voice in supplication.

Then the clouds over the sea dispersed and the moon, already high in the sky, cast its bright rays over the waves. It became as bright as noonday, and next to a high balustrade suddenly singing to the accompaniment of a *koto* became audible. The lyrics of the song consisted of a verse from the first book of the *Man'yōshū* by Ikusa no Ōkimi,⁸ composed when Emperor Yūryaku made an imperial visit to Sanuki province:⁹

Yamakoshi no kaze o tokijimi nuru yo ochizu ie naru imo o kakete shinubitsu

As the wind sweeps untiringly down from the mountain,

my restless mind turns to my wife at home.¹⁰

Over and over the voice resonated intriguingly and the melody was so exquisite that it subdued the sougling of the winds through the pines on the rocky shore and put to shame the cries of the plovers on the inlet. Butōta had no idea what the words meant, but since he had thought that no one else was at the shrine, he was uncertain whether it was a god or a person. He ventured out to the balustrade where he saw an attractive woman about twenty-eight years of age dressed in apparel not seen either in the capital or in the countryside. She was wearing a light blue lined kimono over which was draped a scarlet jacket, and she exuded an indescribable fragrance. With eyebrows as charming as crescent moons, hips as slender and delicate as willow branches, she was like aronia blooming on a branch of cherry blossoms, or like a lotus. With no appropriate attendants nearby, she was served only by a little girl. Sedge mats were spread around them. The sight of her strumming her thirteen-string *koto* as she faced the moon was like seeing the descent of a celestial maiden or the appearance of a princess from the Dragon Palace beneath the sea. It could melt one's heart, and made it seem as if one's soul would dissipate.

Butōta gave out a loud laugh, "I didn't notice you when I came to visit this shrine. When did you come here? I thought it regrettable that I was the only one admiring the moon this evening, but there was someone else just like me." He spoke in a serious tone. Pushing her *koto* aside the beautiful woman replied, "I've been here since early evening, but as I waited for the moon, before I knew it, it has grown dark." Butōta felt agitation in his breast. He would be seen as a yokel and laughed at if he responded in his country accent. Wondering if he should say this or answer that, his face just flushed bright red as he straightened his collar, and finally

⁸ It is uncertain who this is.

⁹ Bakin was in error here. It describes an imperial visit by Emperor Jomei (593-641; r. 629-641)

¹⁰ *Man'yōshū* no. 6. This is an envoy (*hanka*) to a long poem.

responded, “Indeed, it is as you say.” She then said, “I perceive that you are a traveler to these parts, and that your abode is close to the capital. My home is beyond Kannonji (located not more than two or three hundred yards from Kotohiki, this temple is number sixty-nine of the eighty-eight temples of Shikoku, and is also the name of the village section. It should not be confused, however, with the Kannonji in Kyushu),¹¹ but I have an earnest petition, and so I visit this temple every night. This evening the sky is cloudless and the harvest moon is at its best. If you are not in a hurry, let us spend this time in conversation.”

Since she appeared not to be reserved, Butōta felt even more awkward, and said, “That’s more than I could wish for. Had I known I’d have brought some saké. My boat isn’t far from here. I’ll run and buy some.” The woman detained him, “You are my special guest this evening, so I’ll treat you. In which port is your boat anchored?” “In Misaki. Except for me, there are no other passengers, only two boatmen, Jōgo and Jōroku. They’re my good friends, so they won’t mind if we stay here another day or two. I must not fail to keep you company on this night of the sixteenth day.” At that, the woman whispered something into the ear of the servant girl who, grasping the gist of it, ran off toward Kannonji. Finding themselves then facing one another and with nothing to say, Butōta felt even more awkward. His knees began to shake and he felt ill at ease. He tried forcing himself to get closer to her but was intimidated by her noble bearing and was unable to make any advances. The woman drew her *koto* in front of herself and played a song even more exquisite than the one before, but Butōta was unable to follow its meaning. His mind darted about and he was hesitant, but finally unable to resist any longer and, going behind her, he slipped his hand into her *obi*. As he was about to draw her gently toward himself, at a most inopportune moment the girl attendant, accompanied by a lady in waiting, came running back carrying a bamboo container of saké. The woman opened the container and fervently offered him some. Thinking that his amorous overtures would benefit from liquor, he did not decline, but downed one cup after another until he was as red in the face as a monkey. Laughing loudly and singing in a low voice he appeared to have lost himself in his mirth. The women took turns clapping the rhythm, and the poured more and more drink for him until he was drunk out of his senses.

¹¹ This inserted note follows closely the text in *Kokka Man’yōki*. Kannonji is still the sixty-ninth temple in the traditional pilgrimage route.

Close to dawn, as autumn breezes were teasing him, Butōta awoke with a start. He was not in Kotohiki Shrine, but was lying by himself in a totally unfamiliar house. Wondering where this might be, he soon arose and noticed that there was a light in the next room, where the sound of whispering voices could also be heard. “Where is this? And when did I end up here? Were last night’s events only a dream? No, they weren’t. How wretched! I must have been tricked by some fox or badger spirit, and the saké they gave me must have been horse piss.” As such thoughts raced through his mind, he felt the need to vomit but could not, and just sat cross-legged with folded arms and a blank stare. Then the servant girl from the night before came from the next room and invited him, “You must be fully awake by now. My lady is waiting for you. Please come this way.” With mounting suspicion Butōta followed her to the next room where he saw the woman from the night before gallantly attired and seated on a camp stool with eight or nine ladies in waiting lined up behind her. They looked as if they were about to set out, and he was at a loss to understand what was going on. At any rate he did not feel he could approach her until she smiled politely and urged him. “Do not be suspicious. Last night you were very drunk and had passed out, so I had my women carry you to my cottage. I was not able to entertain you properly during your visit to the shrine. This is only a trifle, but please accept it as a souvenir.” Then two of her ladies in waiting stood up and carried in many bolts of silk. Butōta timidly approached and when he examined those gifts they appeared similar to the goods he had purchased in Osaka with the intention of using them for trade. But he could not very well inquire to make certain. He expressed his delight at such a largesse, but only gazed at the gifts without taking them in hand. Turning to her ladies in waiting, the woman said, “Our guest seems a bit sad. Bring him some saké.” Thereupon three of them together brought out cups and a decanter, offering him drink. He tried to refuse, but they insisted. When he finally took up a cup, two other women brought side dishes. When they set them close to him, Butōta saw that they were the severed heads of Jōgo and Jōroku, set on platters. The cup fell from his hand as he shook with fright, not knowing what to do. Intoning names of any and every god, he shouted “Help me!”

Then the woman assumed a solemn tone of voice. “Hey, Butōta, don’t be afraid. I am Shiranui, wife of Tametomo, whom you accused and who suffered the humiliation of being taken bound. On the night of the twenty-third day, the Kikuchi and Harada clans attacked our castle in Dazaifu. My father, Tadakuni, was killed, but he had left a solemn command. So in order to be reunited with the young master, along with my ladies in waiting I broke through the siege of the

castle, met with Half-mile Stone-throwing Kiheiji on the way, and boarding a boat drifted here to Sanuki. I've been in hiding here, doing whatever I can to help the New Cloistered Emperor indirectly. I sent Kiheiji again to the capital and had him scout out the young master's whereabouts. Four or five days ago Kiheiji rushed back in a frenzy and reported, 'The young master was suffering from a serious injury, and on the day he went for a hot spring cure in Ishiyama, the man attending him, Butōta, reported him to Sado no Shigesada, who took him captive.' When I heard that I felt both wretched and frustrated, but thought that instead of such lamentations I should die before my lord does, and took up a blade. But I was admonished by Kiheiji and others, who earnestly dissuaded me. In order to learn the fate of the young master, Kiheiji again went to the capital. And every night I visited the Hachiman Shrine at Kotohiki to pray for my husband's safety. Then you also came to the shrine, unaware that I had secluded myself there for prayer. You disclosed your name and evil deeds, and your bitterness toward others. Your complaining showed a spitefulness beyond compare. And so, you were startled by the sound of my *koto*, which was meant as an offering to the gods and buddhas, and stepped back to the balustrade. There was impertinence in your eyes as you gazed at me, and your intentions were licentious, so we plied you with liquor until you were drunk, then secretly carried you here. Since you had spoken of them as your close friends, we took Jōgo and Jōroku captive and brought them here. Upon interrogating them, we discovered that they were knaves of the worst sort, confessing their past crimes as well as yours, including the matter concerning Tōichi. Not only that, but they mentioned that the young master's banishment to Ōshima had been determined, and that Governor Kano no Mochimitsu would take him there upon his arrival in the capital. And so, I have been running night and day preparing to go rescue the young master on his way to Ōshima, and thus have prepared for departure. We finally decapitated Jōgo and Jōroku, and showed their heads to you. How delightful that this evening I unexpectedly met my enemy, was able to discover my husband's fate, and with the aid of the god of Honda¹² have hope for the future. You have already made a formal accusation against the master of your adoptive father who, I hear, suffered a tragic death. Your crime is so great that it would be insufficient just to put your head on a spike or expose it in a tree. At this time, how pleased the young master would be if we take it and show it to him. Quickly bind him up!" At that, Butōta became even more agitated. "I had no idea that the young master was lord to my adoptive father Tōichi. I

¹² A name for the posthumously deified Emperor Ōjin.

made an accusation at the suggestion of others, but there's no use regretting that now. I beg you, please forgive me ..." Not letting him finish his plea, two ladies in waiting rushed up to him from both sides. He tried to escape when they grabbed him and threw him down, but these women were proficient in *jujutsu* and surprisingly bold, not allowing him to move an inch. Taking him by his arms and legs, they stripped him naked and tied him securely with a hempen rope to a pillar on the veranda. From both sides they pulled his wrists in front, took out daggers with blades glistening like ice and proceeded to cut off his fingers one at a time. Like ten overflowing springs, bright red blood flowed down in ten streams, and his fingers resembled ginger pickled in plum vinegar. Unable to bear the pain, Butōta screamed, but they would not make a quick end of him. Two or three other ladies in waiting brought dozens of sharpened five-inch bamboo pegs and, using a large mallet, pounded them into his right shoulder. Butōta screamed, and when they pounded them into his left shoulder, he screamed again. Then they pounded pegs into his thighs and into his buttocks, sparing only the vital part. He tried to give up the ghost but they would not let him die, but it was even harder to cling to life. With each tormenting peg he cried out in what was indeed the howling of hell until finally his voice



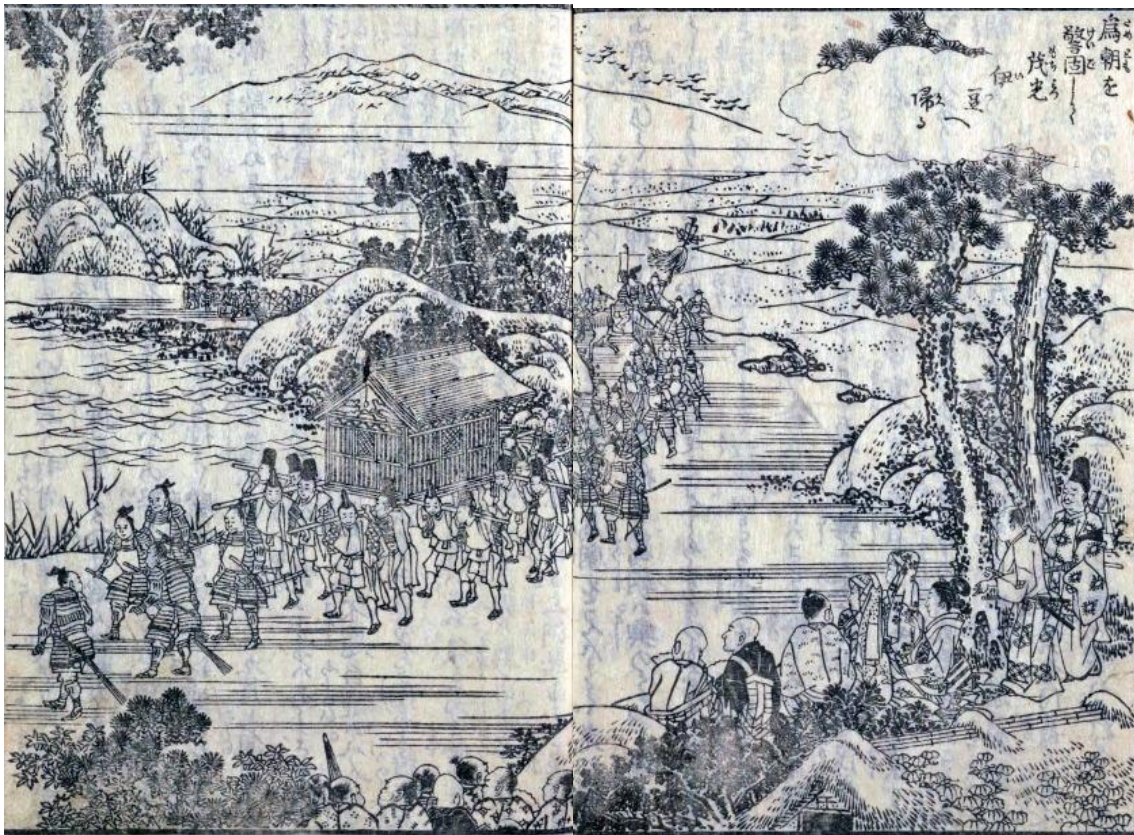
weakened, like the cries of insects at the first frost. “He must know the extent of swift karmic retribution for accumulated evil. That is enough now.” Thus saying, Shiranui abruptly stood up and, taking out a dagger, cut off Butōta’s head. Wrapping it in his clothing, she ordered, “Let’s throw his corpse into the sea before day breaks.” Then leaving one lady in waiting and the servant girl behind to guard the cottage, she went forth at the head of eight ladies in waiting, having them carry on their backs swords wrapped in straw raincoats. With Butōta’s head in hand, they set out looking like country women on a pilgrimage to the shrine in Ise. At the faintest glimmer of dawn, along with the birds leaving the forest, they set out on their journey heading east. Oh, this valiant woman—how beautiful and how heroic, how brave and how cunning! Her exploits put her beyond the mere description of “wife.”

Chapter Thirteen

Tametomo is banished to Ōshima in Izu province,
Shiranui creates a great commotion at an inn in Sengan.

Early in the pprevious eighth month, Kamo no Kido Mochimitsu, the governor of Izu, received a command to go in haste to the capital. Before he could even make adequate preparations he set out at the head of numerous retainers, arriving on the fifteenth of the same month. He was then ordered by the magistrate of Suō, Suezane, to take Minamoto no Tametomo to his place of exile in Ōshima, and to take every precaution enroute. Mochimitsu received the mandate and, taking charge of Tametomo, was already about to head back when lay monk Junior Counselor Shinzei secretly called for him, but no one knew what they discussed.

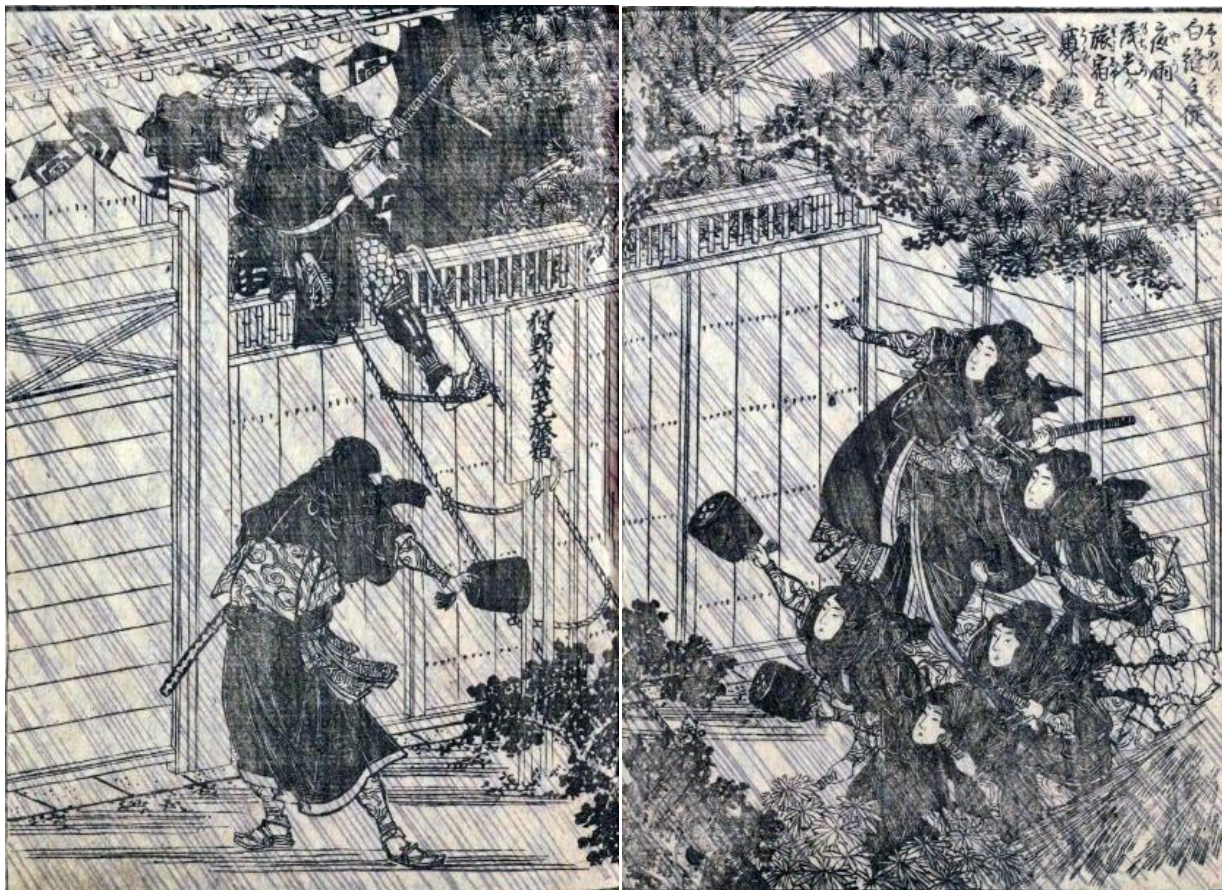
Now Tametomo's shoulder had been dislocated and he was unable to manage the reins of a horse, so they made a carceral palanquin for him to ride in, inserting shafts through all four sides. It was carried by two dozen bearers and escorted by over fifty mounted retainers crowding about on all sides. Mochimitsu rode in the rear ranks, cutting a most gallant figure on horseback.



Hoping to catch a glimpse of the famed Tametomo, both young and old thronged the streets,

making passage difficult. But Tametomo remained sitting upright inside the palanquin and did not so much as show his face through its opening, leaving onlookers unable to get a good look at him.

As they headed east on the distant path that would take days, Tametomo addressed Mochimitsu's retainers, "Hey, listen to me. Being exiled might seem like something to lament, but I'm actually overjoyed. I've been made sport of by an emperor, I'm riding in a palanquin escorted by soldiers, and Mochimitsu is accompanying me to my destination. That's really more than I deserve. Now if you look down on me as a criminal, it will do you no good. It was only because of his majesty's virtue and authority that someone like me could be taken by ordinary men. And even if my shoulder has been dislocated, it's no loss to me. Even if my use of the bow is a bit weakened, if I think I need to shoot arrows I can still shoot through things better than when I first began. What's more, I'm in such a splendid palanquin. Now watch this!" Then he stretched out his arms and legs a little, causing even such an imposing carceral palanquin as that one to shake as if it were about to break apart. Then when he sat down firmly with a shout of "Ya," the poles dug into the shoulders of the two dozen bearers with such force that they were



unable to move. They were all at a loss what to do, only fearing his anger and treating him as a lord or an honored guest. The day passed and they stopped at the village of Sengan, near the border between Suruga and Izu, not far from Mochimitsu's domain. It was early in the ninth month, and since the wind and rain were fierce than night the soldiers on guard ought to have been especially vigilant. But since they were so close to home and exhausted from the long journey, they let down their guard and dozed off.

Now Shiranui, accompanied by eight of her ladies in waiting, was making anxious haste on her way to the capital, and upon surreptitiously inquiring about the young master, learned that he had been placed in the charge of Kamo no Mochimitsu and that they had departed to the east the day before. She felt greatly vexed that they had not arrived in time. Thus it was all the more imperative to hurry, and they pressed on night and day. Mochimitsu was leading a large number of soldiers, making slow progress. Shiranui was moving with great speed and caught up with them on the Mikawa road, but a good chance did not present itself and so she and her women held back for the time being. Under the cover of wind and rain that night she thought to sneak into their lodgings, so they set passwords and waited for the night to deepen. At about the hour of the ox [3:00 a.m.] the rain had let up somewhat, and the nine of them covered their faces with black kerchiefs and, each of them lighting a thief lamp (*shinobitaimatsu*)¹ and stealthily approaching the inn where Mochimitsu was lodging. Ah, how suspicious! Someone had arrived before them and was scaling the wall, certainly a thief. If he should make a false move and alarm people, their plan would fall through. Taking measure of the situation, Shiranui attached a throwing-knife (*shuriken*) to the hilt of her sword and, determined not to let him escape, had two of her ladies in waiting rush to him from both sides. They grabbed him by the legs and pulled him down, but when he tried to shake off their grip he lost his footing and fell to the ground. They tried to restrain him and tie him up, but he kept them at bay, grabbing them by their wrists and thrusting them aside. He again went to the wall and was about to scale it again. Shiranui could not just stand by and watch, so she grabbed the sheath of the knave's sword and tugged at it. When he turned around to fend her off, she got a good look at his face in the lamplight, and could see that it was none other than Half-mile Stone-throwing Kiheiji! They were very surprised and plied each other with questions about how they ended up there. Shiranui first explained how she had purged her bitter feelings by killing Butōta, how she had forced confessions from Jōgo

¹ A lamp with a covering of black oil cloth allowing the user easily to project or conceal the light.

and Jōroku and learned that the young master was to be banished to Ōshima, and how they had followed him here to steal him away, including details of how they planned to accomplish it that evening.

Hearing her whisper all of that, Kiheiji answered in a low voice, “A few days ago I returned to the capital and upon making inquiries about our lord, learned that he had been put under Michimitsu’s charge and that they were to set out for Izu on the following day. Since the matter was urgent, I had no time to inform you. I followed them, keeping out of sight and watching for an opportunity to steal him away. But there were so many around him and I was by myself, so I hesitated because I was afraid that a failed attempt would only make matters worse. But determining to carry it out tonight for sure, I unexpectedly met you here. Our ambitions were for the same lord, and this is surely a sign that we’ll succeed. I’ll go in first and scout out the situation.” With that, he nimbly scaled the wall and soon opened the gate. All were delighted and, stomping boisterously and without restraint, knocked down doors. Since they charged in at full speed with swords drawn, Mochimitsu’s retainers awoke in a start at the racket, and shouting to each other “It’s a night raid!” “Get your bows and swords!” they rushed out in a frenzy. In shadows here or in the crannies there they were awaited, and were cut down at random by the ten of them, all in top form and all brilliantly dashing about so that it was impossible for Mochimitsu’s men to determine the number of their enemy. Now, their minds at ease, Shiranui, Kiheiji, and the ladies in waiting went inside to seek out the location of the young master. In the middle of a parlor in the far recess of the inn the carceral palanquin had been placed, and they were incomparably pleased that no one was guarding it. But when they went to rescue him, the person inside was not Tametomo but a man they had never seen before. Shiranui, Kiheiji, and all the rest were amazed and at a loss as they stared at him.

Then Kiheiji grabbed the man by the collar, pointed a sword at his chest, and demanded of him, “Who are you, anyway? And where are you keeping the young master? Speak up! If you don’t, you’ll feel this sword.” The man replied tremulously, “Before I can explain the circumstances, please loosen your grip on me.” Kiheiji pulled him upright and let go of him, then Shiranui and the ladies in waiting surrounded him to hear what he would say. He finally spoke, “I’m one of Mochimitsu’s retainers. I was temporarily named Tametomo, put in this carceral palanquin, and rode in it all the way from the capital. This was done because when my lord, Mochimitsu, was in the capital, the lay monk Shinzei secretly advised him, ‘Tametomo is a brave



man without equal, and although he is now an invalid, you must not let down your guard. Not only that, but if his remaining allies were to steal him back along the road, it would amount to not only a serious negligence on your part, but would also be a great crisis for his majesty. So put Tametomo under the charge of an astute retainer and set out from the capital two days in advance. Then put a double in the palanquin, have him yell and act in such and such a manner, and make the trip in an open and ostentatious manner. That way, if anything unexpected should happen, the assailant would go to a lot of trouble and get nothing out of it. No one is to be told of this plan.’ That was what Shinzei whispered to Mochimitsu, who sent the real Tametomo ahead two days as instructed. They are probably at the provincial headquarters in Izu by now. Or perhaps already in Ōshima. I don’t know.”

When Shiranui heard that, she lost all hope. “How vexing! We tried to plot, and we were plotted against. We hurried here over mountains and seas, all the way from Shikoku only to have our plans burst like a bubble. How can I go back without meeting him? It’s like the saying, ‘Go to treasure mountain and come back empty handed.’ There isn’t even anyone to show Butōta’s

head to. I give up!” With that, she threw the bucket containing Butōta’s head at the man and was about to cut her own throat when Kiheiji hurried to stop her. “You’ve gone mad! Even if our plans have gone awry this once, as long as our intentions don’t change, it doesn’t have to be carried out this evening. ‘Even a blind turtle sometimes encounters a floating log.’² And ‘sometimes there is a spring when even the *udumbara* flower blossoms.’³ After you’ve planned such a major undertaking, to give in to grief when things go wrong is what a common person would do.” With that he both encouraged and reproved her, and she and her women finally put off talk of self-harm. Then Kiheiji said, “What is most despicable is Shinzei’s sinister scheme and Mochimitsu’s currying favor with him. Since this man is one of Mochimitsu’s retainers, he shouldn’t be left alive.” He was ready to strike off the man’s head when Shiranui stopped him. “Yes, he is truly despicable, but even though he assumed the young master’s name for the journey from the capital, killing him would not feel right. Let’s make it so that he can’t divulge any secret information, and send him away.” Agreeing with her, Kiheiji sliced off the man’s nose and split his lips, leaving him unable to say anything for the rest of his life, and then sent him away. The blood flowing from his nose was like the water flowing from the jar Wengong smashed,⁴ but he was glad that his life had been spared and, covering his face with his sleeves, ran off enduring the pain. For Shiranui, everything had gone contrary to plans, and like a wild duck having lost its mate, it seemed of no use to fly away. Saying various things to console her, everyone relit their lanterns and went out to the gate, but perhaps feeling some lingering regret, she took a close look around her and saw a low fence with a placard set behind a large bamboo post set up imposingly on which was written: Governor of Izu Kano no Mochimitsu. Before she had even breathed the words “You, then, be the foe that I face tonight!” she drew her sword and rushed toward the bamboo post, cutting it in two in the center. With the falling of the placard there suddenly arose a battle cry accompanied by the high-pitched sound of trumpet shells and gongs. Mochimitsu’s soldiers who had been lying in wait came forth all at once, blocking all passage and headed by Mochimitsu on his horse. He shouted, “You vermin! You’ve fallen into my trap, and where are you going to go? Now take your just deserts!” Seeing this, both Shiranui and Kiheiji clenched their teeth. “You filthy thing! You sought to flatter Shinzei and came up

² This proverb derives from a passage in the *Āgama sūtra*.

³ *Udumbara* (J. *udonge*) is a flower in Indian legend that was said to bloom only once every three thousand years.

⁴ Sima Wengong, better known as Sima Guang (1019-1086) tells of an incident when he as a child broke a large jar of water with a stone to save the life of a friend who had fallen into it.

with this crafty trick, but now you should be afraid of what a few women can do. Don't hide in the shadows or suppose that we'll retreat in vain. You're drawn out here by the god of death!" Thus declaring, she and the nine others, looking straight ahead, plunged into furious battle. Mochimitsu's forces outnumbered them, but they were cut down by the sharp blades of the loyal retainer and valiant women who were determined to fight to the death. It goes without saying that Shiranui was determined not to let any escape who might try to flee, but Kiheiji stopped her and reproved her, saying "Mochimitsu has received an imperial command to take charge of the young master, and if you kill him enroute, who would end up under the curse? It would be the same as killing the young master. But if Mochimitsu escapes, it would be thought of as a plot to lure us out. Just consider it an honor to have cut some of them down, and get away from here immediately." Convinced by what he said, Shiranui and her women left on separate paths, racing toward Mount Kanuki.⁵

⁵ In Suruga province.

Chapter Fourteen

Sasarae gives provisions and has pity on the exile,

Tametomo governs the island and pardons the cruel official.

Since Tametomo had set out two days ahead of Mochimitsu and had already arrived in the province of Izu, he knew nothing of the commotion Shiranui and Kiheiji had created at the inn in Sengan, and still supposed that Shiranui had perished in Kyushu. And although Mochimitsu had dispersed Tametomo's remaining allies, Shinzei was very pleased that, because of his foresighted trickery, Tametomo had not been rescued. Soon returning home, Mochimitsu called his deputy, Saburō Taiyu Tadashige, to take charge of Tametomo, saying, "Show him no mercy at all." Now this Saburō Taiyu Tadashige was by nature a greedy and conniving man with no principles, who neither revered the gods nor honored the buddhas, who thought only of his own interests and who even consorted with enemies. When his relatives were in financial straits he treated them like strangers, and he dealt harshly with the islanders, often acting unjustly and unreasonably. Perhaps as retribution for all of this, his wife died of a mysterious illness, leaving him with an only child, a daughter named Sasarae, now seventeen years of age. Though having grown up on an island buffeted by rough briny winds, she was not swarthy of complexion, and though not trained in the manners of the capital, her very sensible disposition was quite unlike that of her father.

Now Ōshima, part of Kamo district in the province of Izu, lies southeast of Shimoda Bay, about eighteen leagues from the shore. They say it is about two leagues across from east to west, and over five leagues from its northern to southern tips, but at that time it must have been smaller. There are mountains on the island, but none are very steep, and since the surf is always beating on the shore the beaches are all rocky. Some old folks claim that the island was opened for settlement during the reign of Emperor Kōan,¹ but since it is only eighteen leagues away, it was probably opened at the same time as the inlets around Izu. The province of Izu was anciently a destination for banishment of criminals, but it was during the first year of Emperor Monmu's² reign that En no Shōkaku³ was banished to Ōshima, and that was probably the beginning.

¹ 427-291 BCE; r. 393-291 BCE.

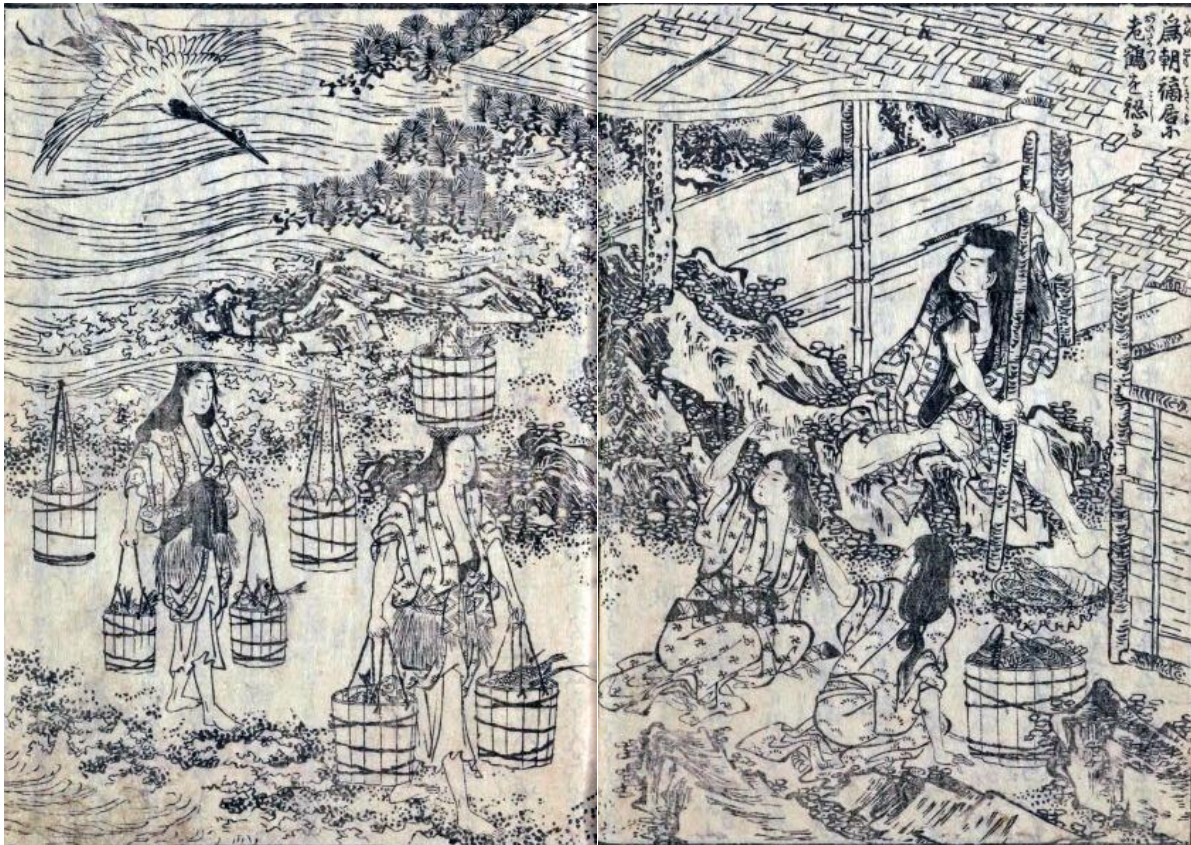
² 683-707; r. 697-707.

³ 634-707, better known as En no Gyōja or En no Otsuno, an ascetic and mystic traditionally held to be the founder of Shugendō.

Nothing is known of Ōshima before that, but even now the grotto that Shōkaku inhabited is still to be found in Senzu Village. The islanders call it Gyōjadō [Shrine of the Ascetic], and often go on pilgrimages to it. Customarily the men of the island go out fishing and the women gather firewood or harvest seaweed for food. Up to now, there have been only meager attempts to raise the five grains. It is a dismal place even for those who are accustomed to it, how much more so, then, for a young master of the Minamoto family to make a permanent home there. Anyone, whether thoughtful or thoughtless, would find this pitiable.

But returning to our story, Saburō Taiyu Tadashige put Tametomo on a boat under heavy guard and went back to the island. There he pointed to a rock on the shore and said, “There is a rule that when exiles first arrive here, they must sit on this rock, so do it now!” Tametomo said mockingly, “Ever since I was small I never yielded to my many older brothers, but in all things did as I pleased. Will you do anything if I sit on this rock now? Or if I don’t? And he made no move in that direction. No matter how he responded he could imagine being knocked down, so Tadashige was somewhat afraid. This Tametomo had a reputation for intransigence and unlike most exiles could not be managed by force. To accomplish that they would first need to bring him under heel by making him face hardships. Tadashige immediately had a crude shelter constructed, thatched with pampas grass, in the mountains far from human habitation. Tametomo was to live in it and be given only one bowl of food per day as they awaited his death from starvation. Now Saburō Tayu’s daughter, Sasarae, was compassionate by nature, and though this was not the first of her father’s evil deeds, she took pity on Tametomo and remonstrated with her father, saying, “I hear people talking about how this Tametomo’s wisdom and valor are superior, and that his skill as an archer has no parallel even among the ancients. He ought to be pardoned now and sent back to the capital, otherwise the islanders will sense his charisma and wish to serve him, so that ultimately he’ll overpower you. Such a person should be treated with special care, but if you subject him to such wretched conditions, it won’t be long until disaster befalls you. As the saying goes, ‘charity is a good investment.’ You ought to receive him in our residence and show him sincere benevolence.” Though she set things forth with utmost reason, Tadashige would not yield an inch. “That’s not for me to determine. I was cordially reminded by my lord Mochimitsu that ‘this is by order of the lay monk Junior Counselor,’ so how could I receive him at our residence? Haven’t you heard ‘When not put to use, even a tiger is inferior to a mouse’? Even if he is superior in wisdom and valor, there is no need to fear him.” After that,

his treatment of Tametomo grew even harsher. Sasarae was deeply saddened, and secretly conspired with women of the island to take daily gifts of food to the young master, thereby consoling him.



The men of this island do not bind up their hair, and neither do the women, nor do they know that there is such a thing as face powder. Though their appearance is thus awful, yet they are of gentle disposition, are unselfish, and do not put on airs. The only lamentable thing is that the five grains do not grow well there, and thus the food is scanty. Therefore, they always greet each other with *asage iku wa ata ka*, which means “Have you eaten breakfast?” just as people on the mainland, whether of high or low status, talk about the weather upon meeting each other. From this one can see how much they value food. Hearing of this, those who are born in the midst of urban plenty and spend their lives thoughtlessly consuming their fill of hot food should realize how fortunate they are and be grateful.

But to return to our story, Tametomo was greatly pleased at Sasarae’s kindness, and as he spoke cordially with the island women who daily brought him provisions, they were attracted to his virtuous qualities. Along with gifts of food, Sasarae sometime also brought dried fish and bundles of firewood. One day one of the island women brought him some fish that he found to

be exceptionally tasty. He praised it, saying, “This is very well pickled sushi.” She replied, “I didn’t pickle it. Out on the open sea there is a bird called *misago* that catches fish for its meals. When it catches more than it can eat, it stores the remainder in crevices in the rocks where it then gets washed by the tides and is pickled like this. The people of Izu call this *misago-zushi*, and it is a rare delicacy.”⁴ Hearing this explanation, Tametomo responded, “A long time ago when I was in the province of Bungo, I visited a person named Kiheiji near Mount Yū, and he treated me to monkey wine. If that were added to this, it would be what is known as ‘delicacies of land and sea,’ and my palate would be in ecstasy.” He laughed and the women were pleased as they headed home.

Thus the year drew to a close and the second year of Hōgen [1159] dawned. It was already the third month, and though the winter had been mild with no snow—not unusual for this island—the spring was even more pleasant. But the cries of sea lions, the strong winds from the inlet whipping the thatched hut, and the waves beating on the rocks all interrupted his dreams. On a bleak daybreak as he was awakened by what sounded like the cry of a crane, Tametomo turned his pillow aside and said to himself, “How strange! On this island there are no beasts but cows, horses, cats, and mice, and as for birds only geese and ducks and such common kinds as would migrate here. But was what I just heard a crane? Such birds must also migrate here occasionally.” He soon got up and looked and it was indeed a crane, fluttering about. When it landed nearby, he heard a tinkling sound and, fixing his gaze on it, saw a golden tag attached to its foot. His eyes welled up as he recalled the past, and he murmured to himself, “This is the crane I brought back from the kingdom of Ryukyu last year and presented to Retired Emperor Toba. I heard that it had been released again, and this is already the third time it has returned to me. There is surely a profound reason for its appearance.” Taking the bird in his arms, he inspected the tag. Written on the back in black ink was a verse in Chinese:

Somnolent willows and leisurely blossoms surround the pavilion by the water,

The enchanted creature again leaves, returning to the Eastern Sea.

Spring, a time when foxes and mists come together,

Before I knew it, the bright moon casts its light in my garden.

He read it and pondered for a while, then said, “Not only my parents and brothers, but my wife, child, and relatives are all dead, and no one is left to think of me, so who could have written this?

⁴ This dish is also described in chapter 44 of *Sansai zue*.

Well, whoever it was, I'll send a reply." Then he poured water on the tag and pressed his sleeve against it. Though the characters then appeared backward, it was transferred onto the fabric.

Then he took a worn-down writing brush and inscribed the following on the tag:

Inishie no tameshi mo omoi-izu no umi no koto tou tori no ato o miru kana

Recalling an incident from ancient lore, over the sea of Izu

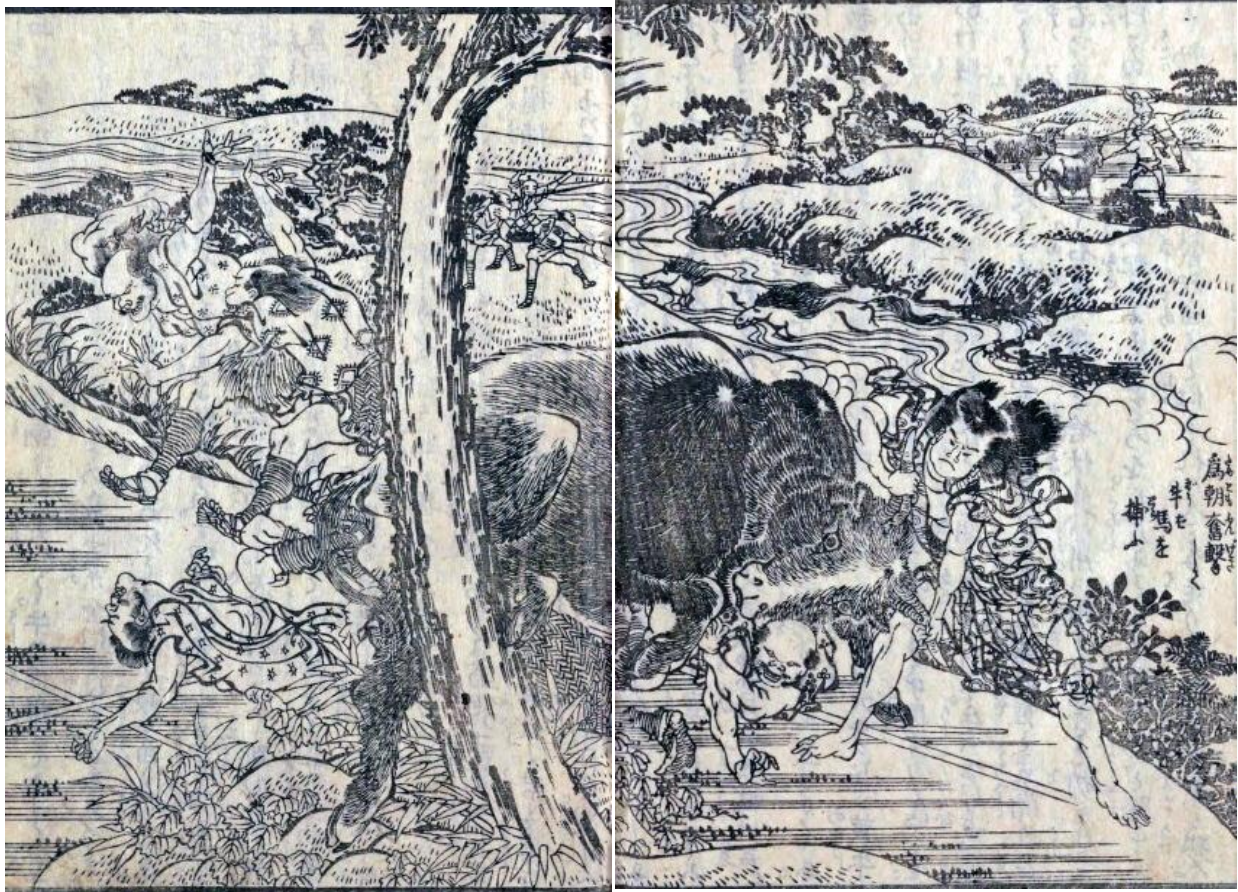
my eyes follow the flight of the bird that called on me.⁵

Then the crane flew up and away to some unknown destination.

Just then he heard voices in the distance, and since the sound was very boisterous he thought it strange and asked an islander who was passing by his gate, "What's going on to make such an uproar?" He replied, "I still don't know. From ancient times there have been many wild oxen and horses on this island. They're fierce and won't let people get close, so there is no one who will tame them and use them to carry loads. But at the beginning of summer when fishing for bonito begins, horns of the cattle are used as bait, so every spring people living by the inlet form groups to go up into the mountains and get horns. About the time when the trees are leafing, the horns will fall off with one hit. But those cattle grow violent when they see people, and will try to gore them. Those who are slow running away might be wounded, and sometimes someone is even killed. The horses are startled by this and start racing around, and a lot of people end up being kicked or trampled. Today is the hunt for the cattle, so they're gathering at the crack of dawn, and what you hear is their battle cry." Hearing this, Tametomo laughed. "You spend so much human energy on something like that? Although I've had my shoulder dislocated and lack the strength I once had, managing a wild ox would be easy for me. I'll go take a look." He asked the man to lead him there and they arrived to find a large number of islanders blowing conch shells and shouting as they milled around, each holding long poles in an attempt to break off the horns of wild oxen. Several hundred oxen and horses were racing about in a frenzy, but one amber-colored ox, larger than the others, was undaunted by the battle cries and unfazed by the

⁵ The "incident" no doubt refers to Su Wu (d. 60 BCE), a diplomat of the Western Han dynasty, who was kept in captivity by the Xiongnu, but claimed to have sent a message back by tying it to the leg of a wild goose. This verse also employs a *kakekotoba*, combining *omoizu* (recall) and *Izu no umi* (the sea of Izu).

sound of the conch shells. It ran faster than the horses and there was no way to stop it. The men were thrown into a panic, scattering before the ever more enraged ox. One man, a slow runner, was about to be trampled. With a shout, Tametomo stepped in and, grabbing the beast by both horns, twisted its neck to the right, forcing it to the ground. The horns broke off from their roots with a pop. Still on it back, the ox struggled to get up, but with one foot firmly planted on its head Tametomo kept it from moving, shouting "Hurry and tie it up!" The men clamored, "Get a rope on its neck! Tie its four legs!" Tametomo burst out laughing. "This is how you tie up an ox." Then he showed the islanders how to put a rope through its nose by first cutting the end of a pole to a point and then piercing the bridge of its nose. They had finally restrained the beast when from out of the opposite ravine galloped a large unbroken horse with fourteen or fifteen men fleeing breathlessly before it. The hooves of the spirited animal resounded loudly as it darted forth as swift as an arrow. Giving it a sharp look, Tametomo grabbed its mane as it sped by and in a flash leaped on its back. Whether on grassland or mountain peak he rode it about, cornering wild oxen and horses and stopping them by pulling their tails or knocking them down. Enraged



oxen would turn around and try to gore him, but to no avail. His dismounted and twisted their necks, forcing them to the ground. After a while he had captured a hundred and fifty or so horses and oxen. The islanders were both overjoyed and amazed. Bowing down to the ground, they were unanimous in their acclaim. “You are not human, but a god sent from heaven. On this isolated island in the eastern sea, anciently there were no people, only oxen and horses, but no one knew how to tame them. Now due to your valor we have unexpectedly gained something precious, and our livelihoods are enhanced. We beg you, please rule this island and bless us with your favor. The deputy administrator of this island, Saburō Tayu Tadashige, is corrupt, oppressing the populace, and we have long felt only loathing for him. Please come, let us charge into his mansion, force him to commit *seppuku*, and satisfy the resentment we’ve held for so long.” Hearing this, Tametomo said, “I’m extremely happy that you have focused your aspirations on me. Though I am now an exile, I am a descendant of Emperor Seiwa and a great-grandson of Hachiman Tarō.⁶ How could I do something that would disgrace my ancestors? Also, this island is a territory granted by an emperor, and so of course I can be its ruler. The fact that I did not challenge his insolence and allowed myself to be abandoned for many nights in a crude hut was to let my wounds heal and wait for the opportune moment. And so, let’s go!” With that he again mounted the horse bareback and, attended by a multitude of islanders—those from the mountains carrying scythes and axes and those from the seashore carrying oars—crowded toward Tadashige’s residence with no sign of fear or trepidation.

Hearing reports of this, Saburō Tayu Tadashige was alarmed, thinking that if a crafty strongman like Tametomo were now to capture the hearts of the islanders, it would be like giving wings to a tiger, and would only strengthen him. Rather than pick a fight with him and end up losing his life, he thought it better to show earnest devotion. He decided to wear ceremonial attire, including a court cap, and accompanied by his daughter Sasarae and house retainers, went out to the roadside to meet him. When the islanders saw that, it was so different from what they expected that they hesitated to strike. While they were vacillating, Tadashige move forward on his knees and bowed his head to the ground, addressing Tametomo, “My heartless treatment of you up to now was unavoidable because of both imperial and lordly command, but I have already done you great wrong, and it is too late for regret. If you will be so gracious as to forgive

⁶ The Minamoto were offspring of Emperor Seiwa (850-881; r. 858-876) who were reduced to commoner status. Hachiman Tarō (1039-1106) is better known as Minamoto no Yashiie.



me, I shall leave to your discretion ministering of rewards and punishments on the island. And henceforth please consider me your servant.” Sasarae then picked up where her father had left off. “Tadashige’s expression of regret for his past crimes is sincere. If you acknowledge the kind intentions I have always shown you, please spare my father’s life.” Father, daughter, and their retinue then all bowed their heads to the ground. Hearing this, Tametomo said, “Tadashige, your crime of oppressing the people can hardly be forgiven. And yet you show penitence for your errors, and your daughter Sasarae’s faithful deeds also atone for her father’s crimes. Though I am willing to suffer the humiliation of crawling between the legs of a man in the marketplace, how could I not consider the bowl kindly bestowed by the woman washing clothes in the stream?⁷ Tadashige, have a change of heart and do not harbor further ambitions.” Tadashige, Sasarae, and

⁷ This refers to two incidents in the life of the military general and statesman Han Xin (d. 196 BCE) who, though of noble lineage, grew up in poverty. A woman washing clothes gave him a bowl of food and he promised to pay her back some day. She refused, saying he was too poor to do that. Once in the marketplace, a local bully challenged him to crawl between his legs, saying that if Han Xin were really fearless, he would stab the bully, and if not, he would crawl between the bully’s legs. He crawled, and was jeered at by the crowd. Years later, after he became King of Chu, he found the woman and rewarded her with a fortune in gold. He found the bully and appointed him to a high office.

all in their household were overjoyed. They invited Tametomo inside and treated him cordially. They also gave food to the islanders and sent them home. Tadashige saw to it that a residence was built for Tametomo and had him move into it. And as if to erase all doubt of his good intentions, said, “Behold, your companion for your bed!” and offered his daughter Sasarae. By nature Tametomo was not a lustful man, but found it difficult to slight such a heartfelt offer. Within three years she gave birth to three children, the oldest was Tamemaru, the second Tomowaka, and the third, a girl, Shimakimi.

After beginning his administration of Ōshima, Tametomo taught the islanders how to cultivate the land and raise silkworms. He himself strolled about, helping with various endeavors, praising those who did well and encouraging the slow learners. The islanders were pleased, and thought of him as a father. In the meantime, he brought five other islands—Miyake, Niishima, Kōzu, Toshima, and Mikura—under his jurisdiction, had scores of boats built, and was like a *de facto* provincial governor. These islands were within the territory of Kano no Mochimitsu who, when the annual tribute was presented, called the deputy administrator Tadashige forth and demanded of him, “Aren’t you slighting me by making someone like that your son-in-law?” Tadashige was greatly troubled by such scoldings, but secretly traded some of the island’s products. Tametomo soon caught on to that and called him to account, and so Tadashige gave that up. Mochimitsu was thus even more resentful and summoned Tadashige who, feigning illness, remained on the island. And so years passed and Mochimitsu was unable to do anything about it.

Chapter Fifteen

Shiranui draws brine in Shido,

The New Cloistered Emperor is drawn down to the realm of the devils.

After cutting down Mochimitsu's soldiers at Sengan, Shiranui and Kiheiji returned to Sanuki, and with no other way to dispel their enmity, again considered various plots. To begin with, Shiranui proposed that they rescue the Sanuki Emperor (as the New Cloistered Emperor was called since he was in that province) and take him by boat to Ōshima where he could join with the young master to raise a rebellion. The eight eastern provinces¹ would be sure to follow. With sincere intent Kiheiji listened, and then said, "I've thought of that too. However, not only the New Cloistered Emperor, but also all high officials in the provincial government who had been in a building in Matsuyama have been moved to a palace Takasue built on Sugu Island. I hear that it's walled on all sides and has only one gate that is heavily guarded night and day, and except for provisions for three daily meals no entry or exit is permitted. Thus, even a large number of soldiers would not likely be able to capture the place. A half-hearted attempt that failed would also put the young master in Ōshima in a dangerous position, so please wait for an opportune time." Hearing that dissent, Shiranui saw the pointlessness of giving it further thought and bewailed her miserable fate.

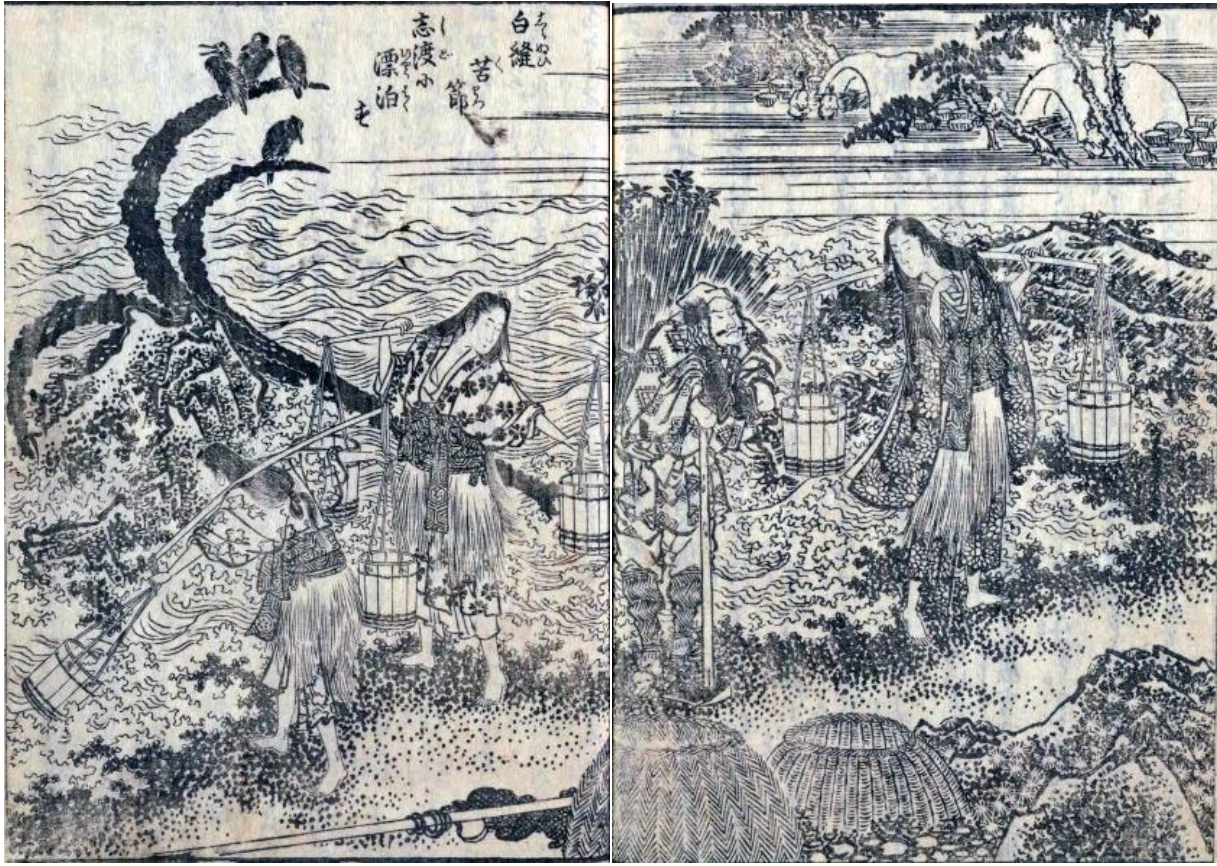
The years of Hōgen ended after only three, and with the new year the era name changed to Heiji.² In the capital, on the eleventh day of the eighth month of the previous year Emperor Goshirakawa had relinquished the throne to his eldest son, Prince Morihito, who then became Emperor Nijō.³ Meanwhile, Provisional Vice-Councilor of State, Palace Advisor and Captain of the Right Division of Outer Palace Guards Lord Nobuyori⁴ remained the favored subject of the former emperor Goshirakawa. Not long thereafter, Junior Counselor the lay monk Shinzei vied with him for power, and ultimately Nobuyori conspired with the Head of Stables Yoshitomo in the eleventh month of the first year of Heiji to raise an army of several thousand men and, under the retired emperor (Goshirakawa) confined the present emperor (Nijō), finally decapitating Shinzei and exposing his head in the dry riverbed by Rokujō. With that, Nobuyori's power grew

¹ Sagami, Musashi, Awa, Kōzuke, Shimotsuke, Hitachi, Kazusa, and Shimōsa.

² Heiji 1 is 1159.

³ 1143-1165; r. 1158-1165.

⁴ All these titles were conferred on Fujiwara no Nobuyori (1133-1160) by Emperor Goshirakawa.



exponentially; the Prime Minister, the Ministers of Right and Left, all court officials feared him and none dared disobey his orders. But he was both short of ability and shallow of wisdom, yet arrogant, keeping tigers at bay from the front door, unaware that wolves were coming in from the back. Stealthily escaping, his majesty entered Kiyomori's residence on West Hachijō, creating an opportune time for the Taira to attack Nobuyori and Yoshitomo directly. Then having lost the night battle at the Taiken Gate, Nobuyori was executed for his crimes and Yoshitomo was slain by Osada⁵ at Utsumi in Owari. Their many children were either executed or banished. The Minamoto had lost their influence, while the Taira were on the ascent, being favored with prestigious appointments and leaving everyone amazed at their newfound opulence and fame.

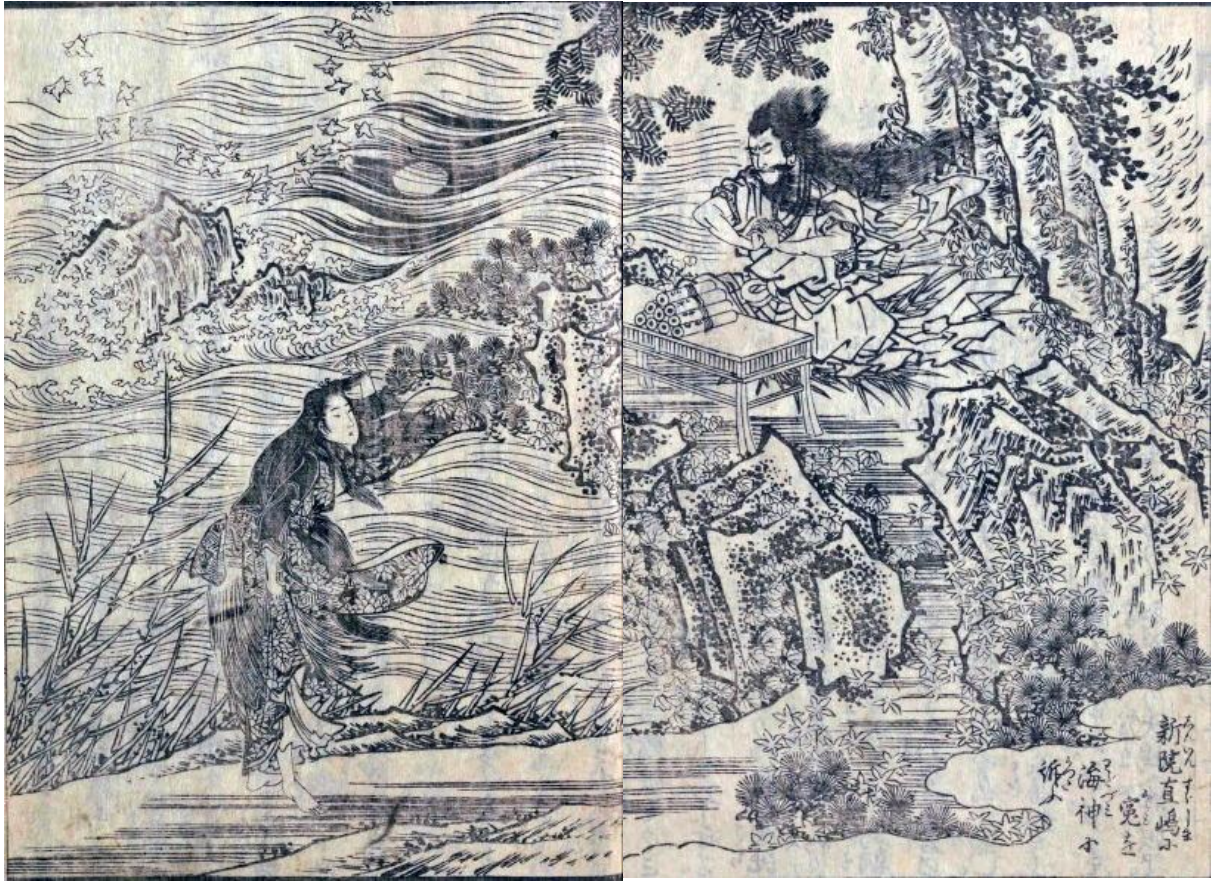
And so, Shiranui had even less hope for realizing her ambitions, and as the saying goes, "If one sits idle and eats, even a mountain will empty out." With no one to rely on, morning meals for both her and her ladies in waiting grew ever sparser, and the ten ladies unavoidably took leave of her service and went their separate ways, leaving only Kiheiji and two servant girls.

⁵ Osada Tadamune (d. 1190), military commander. He is said to have offered Yoshitomo's head to Kiyomori for a reward.

She took up residence by the inlet of Shido and became a diver, an occupation at which she had no experience, and ended up spending her days drawing brine and gathering shellfish. From the beginning Kiheiji disliked living under the same roof with his female chief and moved to Mount Shiramine⁶ where he gathered wood and made charcoal to earn a meager living, sending any money he made to Shiranui in Shido, which she used for clothing for herself and her girls. She always tried to overhear conversations between travelers and boatsmen for possible news about the young master's welfare.

One day she heard a traveling priest speak about things in the east, "Chinzei Hachirō Tametomo has subjugated all the island of Izu and shows no reserve, so the provincial governor Kamo no Mochimitsu is at a loss for what to do. He has stopped all boat traffic to and from the islands and, aside from maintaining his own defenses, has not been able to do anything else." Hearing this, Shiranui was filled with joy, and wanted somehow to send him word that she was alive and safe. Moreover she wished she could travel there herself. But aside from the rough wind and waves making that difficult, all maritime passage to the islands had been cut off, so that she could not go as she wished. And so she sank into ever greater pensiveness, despairing of the fickleness of fate. Thus eight years passed, and in the latter part of the eighth month of the second year of Chōkan [1164], she heard people by the seashore whispering to each other, "Now they say that the New Cloistered Emperor has for some years been offering prayers, but these past seven days he's been secretly slipping out onto the beach of Sugu Island and recites sutras with his figure reflected in the waves. His countenance is most frightful, and some have seen it. Whether this is true or not, it is such a pitiable thing." Shiranui listened intently to what was said and thought about how she had lived by this shore for so long, and that unless the guards were careless, there is no way this report could be credible. But if it was true, then she could approach the New Cloistered Emperor, learn about her husband, and demonstrate the extent of her sincere devotion. Having considered these things, she waited until the night deepened and surreptitiously went alone to Sugu Island where she walked about near the palace. As she scouted out various places, she discovered a single wind-swept pine on the shore lapped by waves, far beyond the palace. Espying a human form there, she approached anticipating the truth of what she had heard. The New Cloistered Emperor, seated cross-legged on a rock beneath the pine tree, had in front of him a simple table on which sutras had been placed.

⁶ In Sanuki province.



Indeed it was not the same countenance as of old, but was more careworn than she had expected. Long locks flowing down to his shoulders had again grown on his once shaved head and his beard hung down like willow branches in autumn. His robe appeared not to have been changed, but tattered and soiled, its light red sleeves flapped in the wind blowing from the sea, exposing his white, emaciated arms and his bony fingers with their sharp nails. How sad that a lord of the ten virtues⁷ should suffer such a miserable fate. As she wondered why that was so, tears streamed down her face, and she was unsure of what to say. No longer bearing to conceal her presence, she let out a loud cry of sorrow, whereupon the New Cloistered Emperor, perceiving someone's presence, became silent and looked about. He asked, "Who are you?" Wiping her tears, she replied, "I am Shiranui, the wife of Tametomo, who fought bravely in the battle of Hōgen in which your majesty was defeated. At that time I was in Dazaifu, where we were attacked by the Kikuchi and Harada clans and where my father, Tadakuni, was killed along

⁷ According to Buddhist lore, an emperor's having been born in that estate was the result of his having kept the ten virtues—1) do not kill, 2) do not steal, 3) do not indulge in sexual misconduct, 4) do not lie, 5) no double-tongued speech, 6) no abusive speech, 7) no irresponsible speech, 8) no greed, 9) no hatred, 10) no delusion—in a former life.

with many of our retainers whose corpses lay scattered around the battlefield. I should have perished also, but was saved by a chief retainer named Half-mile Stone-thrower. I heard that Tametomo had escaped safely and fled to Sanuki with ten attendants, hoping to offer your majesty a measure of protection from without. Unexpectedly I killed my husband's enemy, Butōta, but learned that Tametomo had already been taken captive and was to be banished to Ōshima in Izu. Planning to steal him away enroute we raced down the eastern road, but when we raided the inn where the governor Kano no Mochimitsu was staying, things went awry and we came back here empty-handed. I thought to rescue your majesty, take a boat to Ōshima, and plan something together with Tametomo, but I was accompanied by only one retainer and a few ladies in waiting. Since you are heavily guarded—and I lack the support of any soldiers—there was no way to plan anything, and I have only idled away the time. This autumn it will be eight years. But now the time has arrived. I heard vague rumors that you were secretly offering prayers every night, and with great trepidation presumed to approach your august person and at least let you know of my sincere devotion.”

Listening carefully, the New Cloistered Emperor heaved several painful sighs, then said, “Where it is written that ‘when the country is in disorder a loyal retainer appears, and when weighed down with snow, a pine shows its constancy’⁸ it surely refers to people like you. Though I lack the merits of Yao and Shun,⁹ yet neither have I followed the ways of Jie and Zhou.¹⁰ But through the machinations of the former emperor [Toba] my reign was taken over by Prince Narihito.¹¹ With no way to settle my resentment, I just thought it was due to my own unworthiness and did not say anything. But after Prince Narihito's reign soon ended, there must have been some fresh scheming because Prince Masahito [Goshirakawa], who was of no account, was put on the throne. And so, my resentment only mounted and I finally discussed matters with Yorinaga and called Tameyoshi and others for council. Though we resorted to arms, fate was not on our side and we suffered defeat with only one battle. My having become the guardian of a lone isle is nothing compared to the many who lost their lives for my sake, among them many of Tameyoshi's sons of whom I was very fond. And you, Shiranui, a woman in no way inferior to them, have spent these eight years devoting your aspirations to my benefit. My

⁸ This appears to be a pastiche of phrases from various sources, including *Shiji* and the *Analects*.

⁹ Legendary Chinese emperors who exemplified virtues.

¹⁰ The last kings of the Xia and Shang dynasties, both of whom were famed for their tyranny.

¹¹ Emperor Konoe.

joy at your sincerity is greater than I can express. With the Hōgen disturbance I was so taken up with my personal ambitions that I did not even mourn the demise of the former emperor [Toba] but just sharpened my arrows as I awaited an opportune moment. My reckless struggle to attain the throne was the height of unfiliality, and the fact that I was abandoned by the guardian deities of this land and have ended up roving on an island like this is all the result of my own doing. But now that I regret those things and have a feeling of dread for my mistakes, I am single-mindedly focused on eradicating evil thoughts and attaining Buddhahood, and for three years now have been copying the five major Mahayana sutras.¹² But stuck here in the melancholy of this rocky shore with no conch shells or gongs to be heard, I can only send my writings to the capital. I sent the following to the chief priest at Ninnaji:

Hamachidori ato wa miyako e kayoedomo mi wa Matsuyama ni ne o nomi zo naku

Tracks of plovers on the beach, running a course to the capital—

but in Matsuyama only their cries are heard.¹³

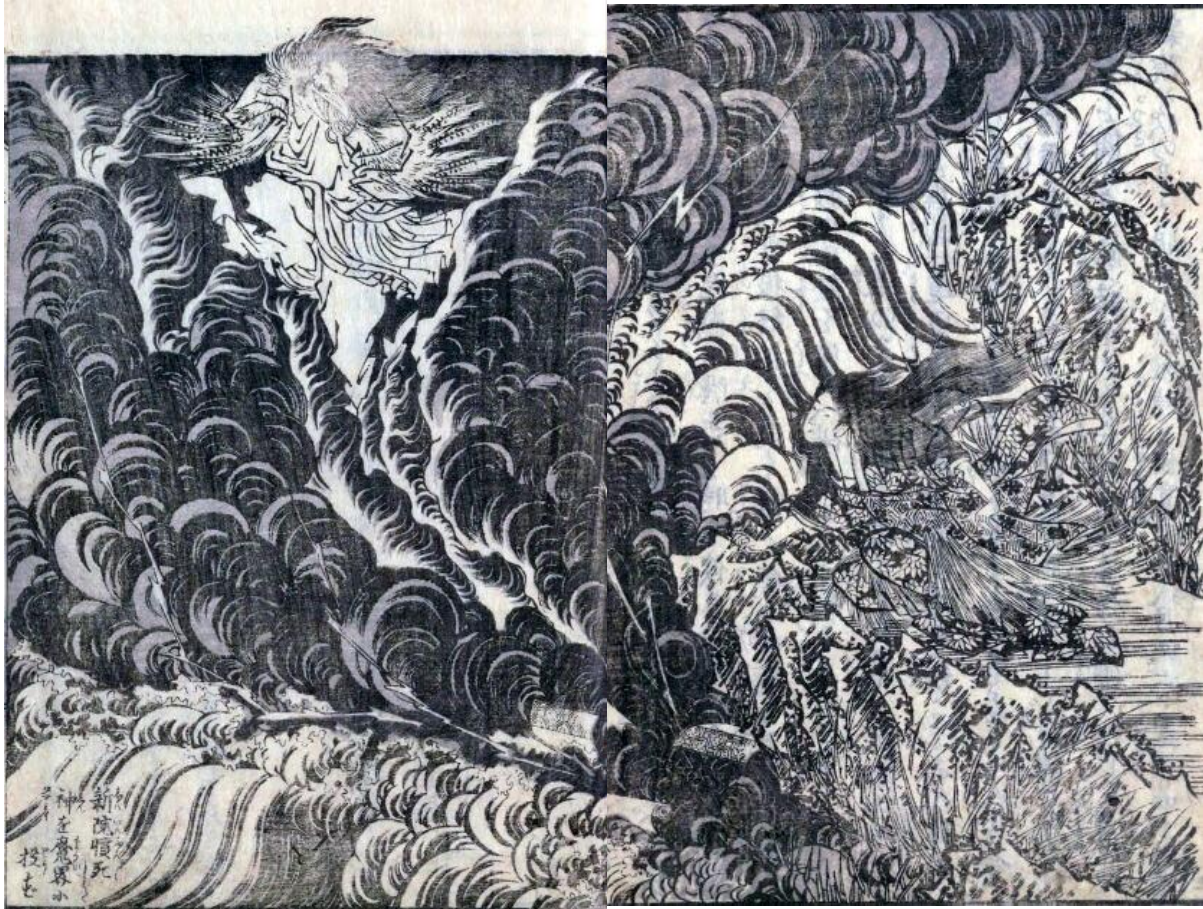
including it with the sutras I had copied. Shinzei then addressed the emperor, ‘Perhaps he intends to pronounce a curse with these.’ And so, without ascertaining the truth of the matter, they were all sent back to me, at which my feeling of resentment also returned, twofold. My penitence for my sin of unfiliality and my having taken Buddhist vows were dismissed with groundless suspicion, Shinzei’s flattering words carried the day, and of all the illicit deeds committed by Prince Masahito, ordering Yoshitomo to kill his father Tameyoshi was the most foolish. You’ve heard, haven’t you, what Confucius said? ‘Anciently, the intelligent kings served their fathers with filial piety, and therefore they served Heaven with intelligence. They served their mothers with filial piety, and therefore they served Earth with discrimination. They pursued the right course with reference to their own seniors and juniors, and therefore they secured the regulation of the relations between superiors and inferiors.’¹⁴ For the Son of Heaven is a parent to his people, and should be a model of filial piety for all under Heaven. Because a father has committed a crime, to order his son to kill his father, is that not to teach the people to have the feelings of beasts? How could he be called a parent to his people? Especially Yoshitomo is beyond contempt. Just because his brother sided with me, he did not follow his father but

¹² These include *Buddhāvataṃsaka sūtra* (*Kegon kyō*), *Mahāśāṃpāta sūtra* (*Daishū kyō*), *Mahāparinirvāṇa sūtra* (*Nehan kyō*), *Saddharma Pundarīka sūtra* (*Hoke kyō*), and *Prajñā-pāramitā-hṛdaya sūtra* (*Hannyashin kyō*).

¹³ “Tracks of plovers,” a common poetic conceit for written characters, in this case the sutras copied.

¹⁴ From *The Classic of Filial Piety* (*Xiao jing*). James Legge’s translation is used here.

attacked him brutally. And concerned only with his own benefit and glory, executed his father. If he had even a trace of understanding of the way for a son to act, he would have refused even an imperial command several times, and if his refusal were not recognized, he would die in his father's stead. But before things even went that far, from the beginning if Tameyoshi thought that it was wrong to side with me, he should not have hesitated to remonstrate directly with his father, and if he did not follow his father, he could have ended his life on the spot, preserving loyalty and filial piety. Then father and son would not have been facing off as enemies in battle, and he would not be charged with patricide. Though they have so perverted the way of sovereign and subject, they nevertheless enjoy the height of prosperity, which so infuriates me that if I don't at least put it down in writing, then there would be absolutely no way to return to the capital. Therefore, I offer these sutras as a memorial to the realm of devils, so that I, while still alive, might become the king of devils, vowing that I shall damn those I hate, including Yoshitomo, Shinzei, and even Masahito. Night and day such thoughts have never left my mind, first of all to engender a feeling of rebellion against Nobuyori and Yoshitomo, to have Shinzei killed and Yoshitomo and his retainers slain by Osada to show Heaven's punishment for patricide. Then to instill pride in Kiyomori's heart so that he will confine Masahito. Then with more than half of his enemies exterminated that would leave only Kiyomori and his clan remaining. Just watch, before long they'll draw this whole country into battle and make it a bit of trash in the vast ocean. I have offered this earnest prayer for five years now, and the time for its realization has now come, and what you'll see will both begin and end today. You should leave immediately." Tearfully, Shiranui advised him, "If your majesty has such a strong desire to destroy the Taira, please board a boat and secretly cross over to a place near Tametomo's place of exile. As for the eastern provinces, in Kai there are the Ichijō and Takeda clans, in Kamitsuke and Shimotsuke there is the Nitta family, while in Hitachi there is the Satake, and many others of Minamoto lineage. If they hear that you've crossed over, there are many who will rush to support you. So please, make haste." The new cloistered emperor shook his head. "That's nonsense. How could that which has pressed on my life day and night for fulfillment of my prayers possibly leave me time to go to the east? But I am delighted with your sincere devotion, and can't let it go unrewarded. Giving it close thought, your conjugal ties have already come to an end, and it would seem that there is no chance for you to come together again. But my spirit will become your marital guardian deity,



and within three years you'll definitely meet Tametomo. Henceforth hide yourself at Chigo Peak in the depths of Shiramine, and wait. If you still doubt, I'll show you a sign before your very eyes." He had hardly finished speaking when he lifted up the table, abruptly stood up, and intoned an incantation as all of the sutras went fluttering out over the sea. Then a wind came sweeping down whipping up waves and causing the surf to beat wildly, spraying like the spouting of whales. Then a streak of black smoke engulfed him and bolts of lightning flashed. Between the dark billows of cloud he appeared briefly in strange guise. How wretched to think that he must have entered the realm of *tengu* goblins. For a time, Shiranui watched as she bowed down on the ground, feeling as if it had all been a dream. She returned to her home by the seashore. As it turned out, the New Cloistered Emperor passed away the following day. It was the twenty-sixth day of the eighth month of the second year of Chōkan [1164], and he is said to have been forty-six years old. If the provincial officials had maintained their strict guard until that autumn, he would not have been able secretly to slip out, but since this was all a result of the spite he had harbored over the years, his spirit appeared as a phantom that many had seen. This

account will be in six volumes appearing in twelve fascicles. This is the first part; the second will be published shortly. And so with this episode I shall put down my writing brush for now.

Chapter Sixteen

Watching birds fly, Tametomo crosses over to the land of women,
Through a spirit dream, the chief woman understands Japanese.

During the Hōgen uprising, against his will Chinzei Hachirō Tametomo was taken captive and banished to Ōshima in Izu province, and though his life was spared, his father and many of his family members lost their heads for the sake of the New Cloistered Emperor. And even Shiranui, to whom he had pledged everlasting devotion, he thought to be no longer in this world, and he had heard that the New Cloistered Emperor had likewise passed away the preceding autumn (the twenty-sixth day of the eighth month of Chōkan 2) at his palace in Sanuki. The world seemed to have become a wretched place, and when he reckoned the time since he was made caretaker of this island, ten years had already passed. His helpmeet Sasarae was very devoted and had given birth to three children. But he no doubt also felt confined in some ways, thinking betimes of how things might have been, or what the fate of his children might be. With no way to show tender affections, a fierce warrior must be like that. Even Saburō Tayu Tadashige



was intimidated by Tametomo's military prowess, and no longer entertained evil intentions.

It was the third month of the first year of Eiman [1165]. Saying that he needed to do a tour and inspect the islands of Izu, he set out on a swift boat accompanied by only a few men, making stops at the islands of Toshima, Utomashi, Nijima, Oki no Oshima, Sese, Onhase, Inanba, Mikura, and Kōzu. Of these, Utomashi, Sese, Onhase, and Inanba were uninhabited and required no further attention. Those who frequent them are fishermen who are undeterred by the rocky shores and rough waves. Determined to maintain the Eight Virtues of benevolence (*jin*), righteousness (*gi*), propriety (*rei*), wisdom (*chi*), filial piety (*kō*), brotherhood (*tei*), loyalty (*chū*), and trust (*shin*),¹ and keeping as his guiding principles those of a valiant warrior, when he visited various islands Tametomo was received with all due respect and given detailed information building him to his next destination. About ten leagues beyond Kōzu lay Mitsuke Island (now known as Miyake). This island was a bit larger, so he stayed there for some time. One day as he was walking on the shore, he called on the chieftain of the island and asked, "Are there any other islands I should visit?" The chieftain replied, "Beyond this the ocean current is so strong that fishermen don't dare take their boats out very far. Therefore, no one knows whether or not there are other islands. But even if there are, since no one could go to them they would be uninhabited. And even if you were able to reach them, it would not be worth it." Before he had finished speaking, a flock of unfamiliar birds rose up and flew out toward the open sea. Tametomo gazed steadily at them, and said with irritation, "Look at those birds. They're off in search of a place to roost, aren't they? If there were no islands ahead, why would they be flying in that direction? Idiots, why are you making a fool of me?" The chieftain, greatly impressed with Tametomo's perceptiveness, answered with trepidation, "It cannot be said, then, that there are no more islands. Legend has it that, a hundred leagues from here over the sea lie places called Women's Island and Demon's Island, very frightful mountain islands, but no one has ever been to them, so I cannot say for certain that they exist. Look, from morning until dusk the spray of the surf clouds the view over the open sea. There are only tall waves, some over two hundred feet high. Also, the ebbing and flooding of the tide is irregular, sometimes ebbing on either the east or west side, and at the same time there is a current from the southeast. There is also a current that flows from the west. These two currents are so fast that they are like the rapids of a river, and the

¹ There are various versions of the Eight Confucian Virtues. Significantly, this is the same version that Bakin applied to his eight dogs.

seabed being full of large rocks it creates spouts that are noisier than thunderclaps. These are called either the black tide or the mountain tide, their very names suggesting their frightfulness. Any boat caught in these currents will be instantly carried away several thousand leagues, with no way to return alive. This is all only something I've heard, for who could have seen the black or mountain tides? Though they are such dreadful islands, since you are of very bold spirit, even if we tell you plainly, you will not abandon the idea with no purpose. But I speak in all sincerity and am not deceiving you: I never said that you would not end up in the belly of a great fish. Please do not be angry with me."

Listening to this, Tametomo guffawed and asserted, "In Chinese books it is written, 'To the east of Japan lies the land of women,'² but that is not a credible statement. And even more uncertain is the claim that there is an island inhabited by demons. For those that do not perish are called gods (*kami*), while those that die and are not worshipped are called demons (*oni*). Gods and demons have no constant form. What are usually called demons belong to the category ghosts, but these days people have altered the meaning and call anyone aggressive and violent a 'demon.' Or, facing an enemy, someone might take pride in being called a demon. There are also such words as *oniyuri* [tiger lily] and *onimiso* [pungent bean paste; weak person who acts tough]. Therefore, those who live on that island are not really demons, but are only called that because of their ugliness and the privations they suffer. Well, be that as it may, I find it regrettable after having visited so many islands that there should be others remaining that I have not seen. Prepare a boat for me right away! I'll set out to those places directly."

The islanders standing nearby exchanged glances with Tametomo's retinue, but no one said a word. Then the island chieftain crawled toward Tametomo on his knees and, burying his forehead in the white sand, remonstrated with him, saying, "Young master, I plead with you to listen to me. Even we who have lived our entire lives on this island of less than three square leagues would not think of putting our lives on the line for that, and how much less, then, should a descendent of Emperor Seiwa, the son of Lord Tameyoshi, do so. The fact that, because of disturbances in the world, you have ended up as caretaker of islands swept by rough winds and waves is a great blessing to those of us in these parts, and we all pay you homage. If you are pardoned and return to the capital, you will be given a high appointment and compensation,

² This phrase appears in Li Shizhen's (1518-1593) *Bencao gangmu*, known in English as *Compendium of Materia Medica*.

which would redound to your posterity's benefit. But to lose so precious a life because of a moment of ardor and valor—however noble those feelings might be—going to Demon's Island is more dangerous than facing the depths while embracing a rock. I beg of you, please abandon this plan." His followers likewise tried every argument to dissuade him.

Tametomo listened attentively, then declared, "To be sure, it is evident from your words that you do not slight me, and what you say is not without reason, but when I think of the examples of Zhang Qian crossing the Yellow River or Xuanzang going to obtain sutras,³ both of whom made dangerous journeys over tens of thousands of leagues to attain their goals, that is what the aspirations of a manly man should be like. That is where my intentions lie, and I'm not doing this only for myself. I think that Women's Island and Demon's Island originally belonged to the territory of Japan, but since people were too afraid to go there, there was not benefit for us and only loss for them. It should be a matter of rejoicing for you islanders that I'm putting my life on the line. Could there be any greater thing than this? Those of you who fear for your lives, remain here. I'll go even if I have to go alone." There was a look of anger in his face. Moved by his words, two stout-hearted islanders said, "What you say is true. We'll be your guides. Please take us along." Tametomo was pleased, and ordered them, "Well then, first of all load provisions into the boat." At length everyone boarded, including the two who had accompanied him from Ōshima. Since there were fair winds they hoisted the sail and the boat set off with the speed of an arrow out onto the open sea. When it disappeared beyond the waves, the chieftain and all those remaining stood motionless on the rocky shore, staring vacantly and muttering, "How pitiful! There's no way they'll come back alive."

Tametomo and his crew—together five men—were on the boat sailing in the direction of the wind out over the vast expanse of the blue sea to an unknown destination. Since he had come of age in the farthest reaches of Kyushu he was accustomed to sailing and, keeping close watch of the compass, said things like "Steer to the right." His four crew members, all having put their lives on the line, worked through the night covering fifty or sixty leagues and anchored at a

³ Zhang Qian (195-114 BCE), diplomat and explorer during the Western Han, made long and dangerous trips into Central Asia, bringing back reports that led to the opening of the Silk Route. Xuanzang (602-664) was a monk who traveled to India to obtain sutras.



strange island with rocky cliffs on all sides—over three hundred feet high in some places, two hundred feet in others—a towering solid rock leaving no way to go ashore. But throwing the hooks and ropes they had brought with them onto the rocks they reeled the boat into a place between crags and, setting out a plank over the water's edge, were able to go onto the rocks. But the boat was being tossed by rough waves and looked as if it might be dashed against the rocks. The crew members turned pale with fear, saying, "If this boat is wrecked, how will we ever make it back? What shall we do?" Tametomo burst out laughing. "If you leave a boat afloat, it'll be rocked by the waves and will be smashed on the rocks. Watch what I'm about to do!" Then rolling up both sleeves, he wrapped himself around the prow and, with a shout of "Heave-ho," turned the hull against the sand and easily pulled it up onto land. The crew members praised him as trustworthy, saying, "Truly, the young mast is a god. Even if this is Demon's Island, if we serve such a fierce leader we have nothing to fear."

As they searched about on the rocky shore they found sandals woven from tree bark, lined up with their heels pointed toward the open sea. They cried in amazement, "The legend

must be true that whoever drifts to Women's Island and puts on one of these sandals will become the husband of its owner." They went on and discovered much unfamiliar vegetation and birds they had never seen before, among them one that appeared to have migrated recently, one similar to a swallow but larger than a dove and with a belly blacker than that of a crow. Watching a few of them flying about, Tametomo said, "There must be human habitation in the direction they're flying. Let's hurry and see." With the birds as their guide, they hurried along and found smoke rising from among the trees. Then they could see a group of twenty or thirty houses, among which was a large grass-thatched house with pillars of oak and walls of woven bamboo wattling. The house itself was low, but the floor was very elevated. Tametomo surmised that the roof was of low construction in order to avoid its being torn off by winds from the sea, and the floor high to avoid the dampness of the ground. As to why the walls were not painted, he guessed that it was so that the red and white ants—so numerous that there was hardly room to walk without stepping on them—would not devour the pillars. He did not enter right away, but stood outside waiting for someone to come out. Peering inside, he saw a group of six or so women, all with exceptionally long hair, some of them with locks a foot or two longer than their body height, others with their hair bound in three circles like the tail of a horse and tied with a silk ribbon. They wore kimonos with short hems tied with sashes of island silk five or six feet long. They sang as they worked at their looms:

The silk from the bamboo too, / For the eighth man, / Yes, for the eighth man. / Oh-sa-
/ Hide it, hide it. / Oh-sa- / Hide it.⁴

Their low, gruff singing voices were synchronized with their motions at their looms. Tametomo and his followers were so enthralled by the singing that they could no longer maintain their silence and laughed. Finally sensing their presence, the island women stared at them in frightened amazement. Abandoning their shuttles, they stepped over their looms as they scrambled to exit from the back door except for one: a woman about eighteen or nineteen years of age who remained working at her loom and not showing the least sign of fear. Tametomo ventured inside and, facing her, asked, "Everyone who sees me runs away, and anyone who doesn't know me ought to be suspicious and afraid. So it's hard to understand why you alone

⁴ The words are in an obscure dialect. Bakin took these words—as well as many other descriptions of island life—from Furukawa Koshōken's (1726-1807) *Hachijō hikki*. Furukawa notes that the word *hatchō* in the song is dialect for *hachio*, or "eighth man," and refers to Hachirō, or Tametomo.

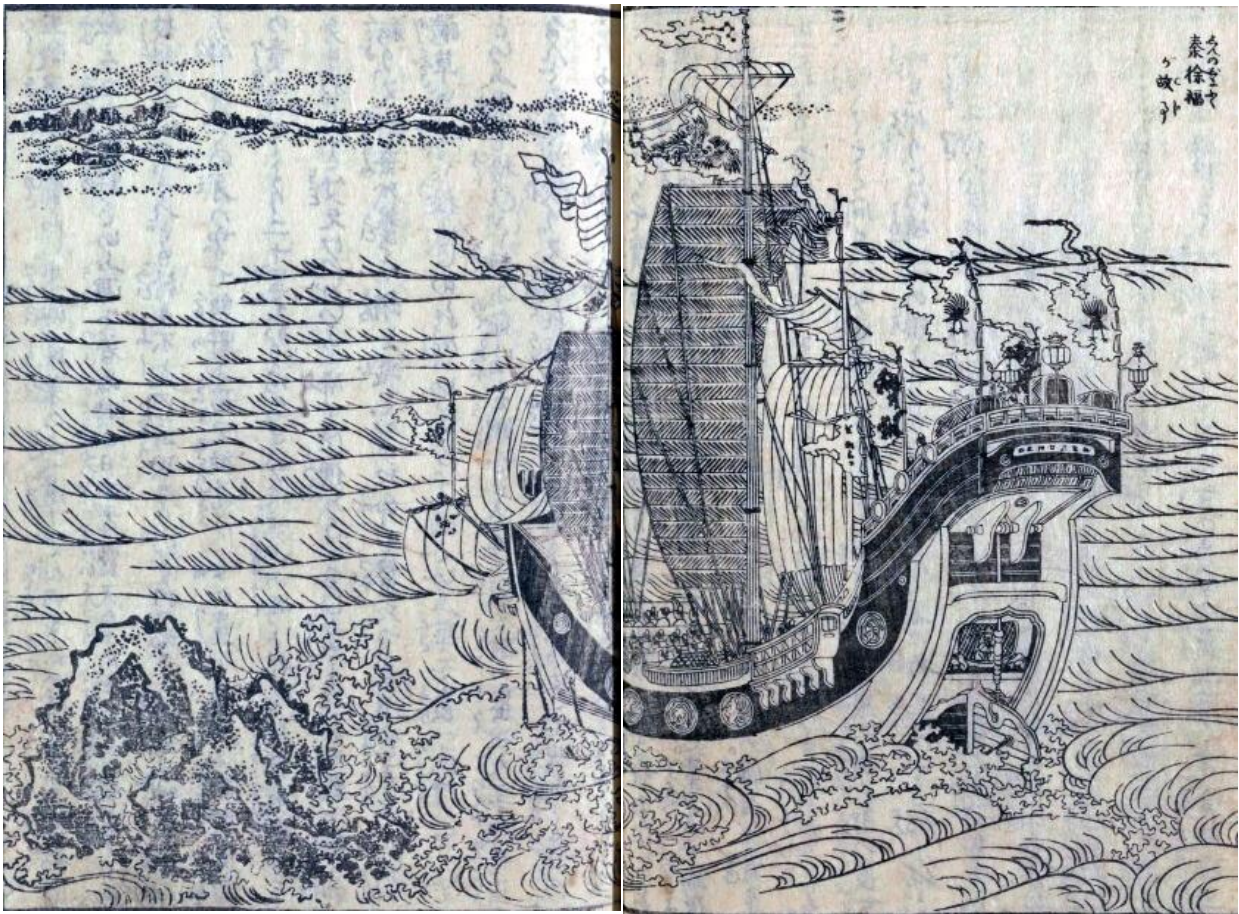
have remained. Is this Women's Island? And is there a chief on this island?" Maintaining her composure, she stopped her work and replied, "Since this island is far from the transitory world, even I have no idea what it is called. Since there are no men, it could be called after 'women.' There has never been a chief on this island, so we have no way to serve a lord. When flowers blossom we know it's spring, and colored leaves tell us that it's autumn, but there is never any snow or frost. The weather is always warm here and cold is unknown to us. Thus, in winter we wear kimonos, and in summer unlined tunics. We wear neither sedge hats nor straw raincoats even when there is rain or strong wind. We cover disheveled hair with island silk and tie cloth around our cheeks. We use no bedding when we sleep. When the days are as long as our hair we spend them listening to folk songs and laughing, I'm embarrassed to say." Listening to her, Tametomo thought it strange. "When I listened to the other women speaking, I couldn't understand them, but your answer is no different from ordinary Japanese. Are you human, or a goddess? Or, you're not from this island? Very strange!" She responded, "It's quite natural that you should find it strange. There is a man named Chinzei Hachirō Tametomo who was banished to a place called Ōshima, where he has spent ten years. He took pity on the islanders, and thanks to him their agriculture and fishing have flourished. But he is of a fierce disposition, and if anyone defies him in the least he will shoot them with an arrow. Thus, in the song you just hear, *Kinu no take demo hatchō ni mase na*, in this island's dialect *hatchō* is 'Hachirō.' *Hatchō shikata yumi, ko wa hatchō* means 'Hachirō will have both bow and arrow,' meaning 'Hachirō is strong.' And *mase na* is 'do not give,' and *hisame ya* is 'must hide.' Now those of us born on this island have never heard the language of the Japanese people, but last night I was told in a strange dream: 'Tomorrow morning, Hachirō Tametomo will come to this island, and you will all be blessed by his presence. But since you will be of different speech, if he says such and such, it means such and such ...' and so forth, teaching me the Japanese language in a most courteous manner. I asked, 'What sort of person are you?' and was told, 'I have lived for a long time in Yamada, in the Watarae district of Ise province. If henceforth you worship me as Kiba Myōjin, this island will greatly flourish.' Then I instantly awoke from the dream, but remembered everything I had been taught. Therefore, although the others ran away and hid, I perceived that you are Lord Tametomo and remained. And that is why I understood you and was able to answer in Japanese." Tametomo was even more amazed. "Just as you guessed, I am Hachirō Tametomo. And the one you saw in your dream would no doubt appear to be the great goddess Amaterasu.

Though the path here has yet to be opened, this island is also within Japan's territory, and that is why you were given such a manifestation. This is very promising." Then he bowed deeply in the direction of Ise. His drew members standing outside overheard all of this and, moved to tears, dampened their sleeves.

Chapter Seventeen

A valiant woman wields a sword and instantly slays a wildcat,
A fierce warrior settles on a plan and all couples gather.

Then again facing that woman, Tametomo said, “You say that there are no men at all on this island, but the primal cosmological essence (*taiji*) engendered Heaven and Earth, Heaven and Earth engendered *yin* and *yang*, and *yin* and *yang* engendered man and woman. This is the natural way of things. In what countries are children born without a father? On which islands are there wives without husbands? In the ‘Women’s Island’ I’ve heard of in legend, it claims that the islanders are impregnated when a wind from the south blows on them, but how could any



sensible person take that to be true?¹ Also, on the shore here there were a lot of sandals, but the claim that anyone who puts on a pair will become the husband of its owner sounds like

¹ Such a legend appears in *Sansai zue*.

something youths might say in a ‘rainy night’s tale,’² but could it actually be so? That would be more unusual than finding bones in a jellyfish. So, when was this island first opened to habitation? And what is your name?” She replied, “I am called Higashi no Shitchō Sabori no Nyoko. There is no definite written record of when this island was first settled, but according to oral accounts, when the first emperor of China’s Qin dynasty³ sought an elixir of longevity, a certain Song Wuji recommended that to the east of Fusang⁴ lay three magic mountains. Many wizards were said to live in these mountains, concocting an elixir of immortality. The alchemist Xu Fu⁵ said that he had been to those magic mountains. The emperor then summoned him and, according to his words, had ten ships built, put five hundred boys and girls aboard, stocked them with gold, silver, precious jewels, the five grains, and all manner of equipment, and sent them off toward Mount Penglai⁶ in the eastern sea in search of the elixir. Xu Fu’s boat arrived in the bay of Kumano in Japan. It was during the reign of Emperor Kōrei.⁷ Xu Fu was unable to obtain the elixir and, fearing trouble as a result, did not return to China. He remained in Kumano, abandoning the girls on this island and the boys on a mountainous island twenty leagues from here. Hearing that Xu Fu died in Kumano, the children lost any chance of ever returning. They planted the five grains they had brought, cultivated the land, raised wild silkworms and wove cloth, barely eking out a stark living. When there was not enough to eat they plucked various kinds of herbs and nuts to supplement their diets. They extracted salt from the brine and made vinegar by squeezing juice from things like tangerines, bergamots, and arbutus, then adding leftover fish for a kind of salted chopped meat. They call this *shiokubari* and, when things are simmered together with it, it makes for a dish that even now is considered the greatest delicacy. Now from ancient times we have not forgotten the good things about our homeland and down through the ages have made conjugal vows with those on Men’s Island, but the teaching has been handed down to us that husband and wife living together in the same place evokes a curse from the god of the sea, and so only once a year, on a day when the wind blows from the south it is

² A reference to the famous “rainy night’s discussion” in the “Broom Tree” chapter of *The Tale of Genji*.

³ Qin Shi Huang (259-210 BCE; r. 221-210 BCE).

⁴ A legendary land to the east of the mainland. It was visited and described by the Buddhist missionary Hui Shen in 499, and various theories have claimed that it is Sakhalin Island, the Kuril Islands, Kamchatka peninsula, or even America.

⁵ B. 255 BCE, disappeared at sea in 210 BCE.

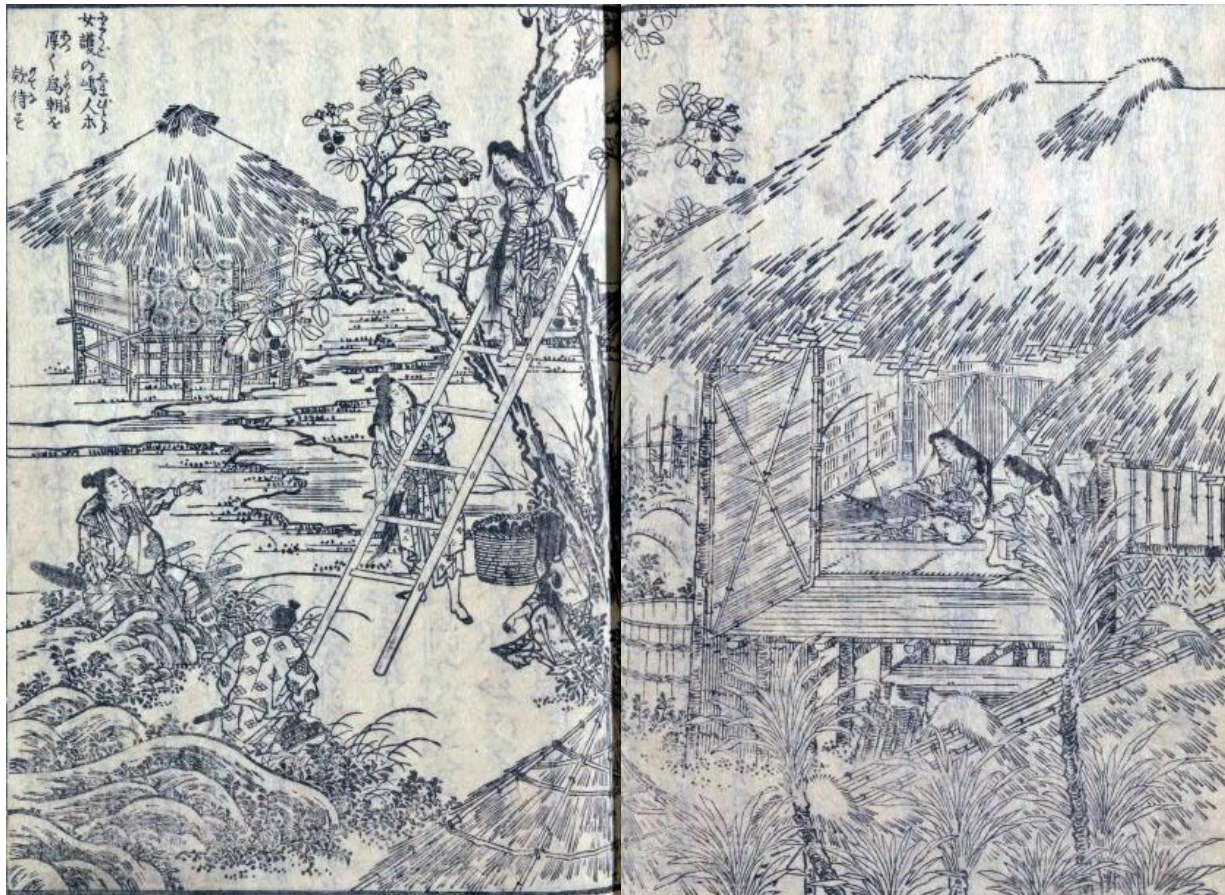
⁶ A mountain in Chinese mythology.

⁷ 342-215 BCE; r. 290-215 BCE.

said that the god of the sea grants permission for men to cross over from their island to take a fleeting, dreamlike nap with us. Any boys who are born from these unions are sent to Men's Island, and the girls stay here. This has been mistakenly retold in the world that the south wind impregnates the women. And the custom of setting out sandals is not quite like what you said. They express a wish that each of our husbands will come safely this year also when a favorable wind blows. The fact that they point toward the shore expresses the feelings of those who wait, much like the practice in Japan of setting out a meal (*kagezen*) for a person away on a journey. These are the customs on our island."

Upon hearing her detailed account all were amazed, and Tametomo slapped his knee in a moment of sudden comprehension. Indeed, not all town gossip could be dismissed derisively. What this woman just now explained is not quite the same as legends passed down in society, but then neither are the legends too far from the truth. People go through life in very diverse worlds. People who are born in urban bustle eat without tilling and clothe themselves without weaving, giving no thought to the harsh lives of those in the country. In spite of their good fortune they are given over to pride, begrudging any deficiencies, coveting tenaciously, and knowing no satiety. They therefore end up having no favor of gods or buddhas, and many of them leave no posterity behind. Tametomo had toured the islands of Izu and thought he had seen incomparable pathos, but then there was this island. He thought that if he provided its inhabitants with instruction, had the men and women live together, and added it to the Izu island chain, it would prove to be of great benefit to the world. He had softened the tone of his words and shown such compassion that the island women who had run away came back, listening in the shadows. Though they could not understand his words and did not know exactly what he was saying, they could make partial guesses, calling to each other excitedly, "Come listen, second sister, third sister, fourth sister ..." Before long they had gathered about in a tight circle. In their island dialect they said, "Has a god come to us? We've known for a long time that Hatchō would come, but we just thought he would be a fierce warrior adept with the bow. Who would have thought he would be so compassionate and kind? Brinjals are now at their best. Let's gather some, add them to *shiokubari* and cook them for him." Then two or three of them dashed off, set up a rope ladder, and climbed up the brinjal tree, knocking down many of the large fruits.⁸ To these they added

⁸ The brinjal, or eggplant (J. *nasubi*) familiar to readers does not grow on a tree, leaving it questionable what kind of fruit Bakin had in mind.



yams, *daikon* radish and various other things together in a stew and served it to Tametomo together with salted herbs. What they call *ashitakusa* is a plant that has several stems growing out of the soil and, together with its roots, resembles a carrot. It has a bittersweet flavor. The seeds are planted in winter, and around the vernal equinox they sprout, growing to a height of seven or eight inches during the year. The leaves do not wither even in the cold. After three years they are dug up, leaves and roots are separated, and both are used as food. Also, when turnips are cut off at the soil line new foliage sprouts from the cut, and this can be repeated several times.

Then facing the daughter of Sabori, Tametomo said, “It’s very unusual to see brinjals in the spring, and I’ve never seen them on such a tall tree.” She replied, “On this island it’s warm even during the winter, so plants do not wither and leaves do not fall. Brinjals are produced year-round, the trees lasting two or three years, and are called three-year brinjals. (Note: *dadaka* is a Chinese name. In the *Dupian Xinshu* it states that “*Dadaka* refers to the flower of the three-year brinjal.”) Since so much of what he saw was unusual, and so much of what he heard defied comprehension, Tametomo again asked the daughter of Sabori, “Isn’t your name rather difficult

to say? Why are you called ‘Onoshima no Higashi no Shitchō Sabori no Nyoko’?” She laughed. “Men’s Island is populated by descendants of the boys Xu Fu abandoned there. On that island, the oldest boy is called Tarō, the second Jirō, the third Sabori, the fourth Shitchō, the fifth Gorō, the sixth Rokurō, the seventh Shitchō, the eighth Hatchō, and the ninth Kurō. And they don’t have any other names. And on this island the oldest girl is called Nyoko, the second Naka, the third Teko, the fourth Gusu, the fifth Jiirō, the sixth Kuzumushi, while the seventh, eighth, and ninth are called Ōgusu, Ōgusugusumushi, and so forth, and neither do we use any other names.⁹ Since those names can be confused, they are prefaced by the place name as well as the names of the father and grandfather. For example, in my name, my father lives in the eastern district of Men’s Island and is the third son of Shitchō, and I am his oldest daughter, so I am Higashi no (place name) Shitchō (grandfather) Sabori (father) no Nyoko. Also, a favored daughter is called *atsuwa*, a thief is reviled as a *nusutama*, buttocks are *shigeta*, feet are *tsukumi*, tears are *menada*, a bucket is *shiyoke*, a hoe is *komaga* while a plow is *hyūtega*. Clothing is *hera*, a crag is *yawa*, and the back of the body is *hetaka*. To cry is *unaru*, and the gods of silkworms are called *tera*. These are examples of the dialect of this island. Others can be understood by comparison with these.” Tametomo nodded, and then addressed the crowd in the island dialect. They all completely understood him, and none found it complicated.

The next day Tametomo had the women give him a tour around the island. The sky over the sea was cloudless, and the mountains of Izu were visible as well as Mount Fuji in Suruga, Ise, and the peaks of Shima. Also, in the southwest were what appeared to be mountain islands. He thought they might be in Satsuma Bay, but was not able to see them well enough to be certain. When he thought that, long ago Xu Fu came from Kumano and left girls on this island, it was when Emperor Kōrei was enthroned in his palace which was named *Ioto no miya* in Kuroda.¹⁰ The emperor pointed to this island and said that it was the enchanted Mount Hōrai¹¹ of the eastern sea. And since Fuji, Atsuta, and Kumano have also been referred to as Hōrai, this certainly is not without reason. Though there is no coral,¹² there is a tree growing to a height of ten feet resembling a cassia and producing wood with a most exquisite grain. He asked what it was called and was told “It’s a *soro* tree.” There was also a tree between fifty and sixty feet tall

⁹ These names, for both men and women, accord closely with what is found in *Hachijō hikki*.

¹⁰ The year before Kōrei’s accession to the throne, the capital was moved to Kuroda in Yamato province.

¹¹ Mount Penglai in Chinese mythology.

¹² The mythical Mount Penglai was said to have coral-bearing trees.

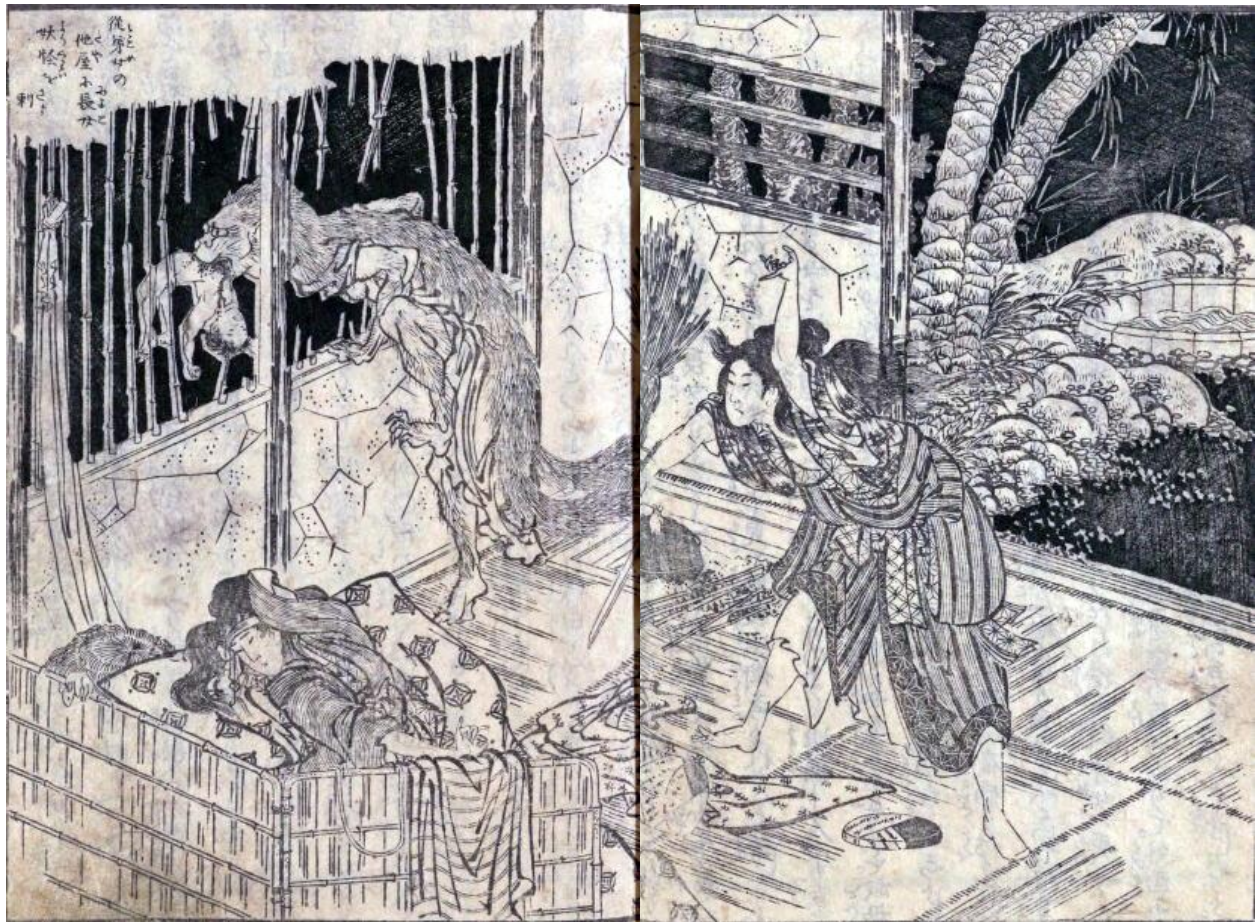
with leaves shaped like those of a hare's-foot fern—but broad like those of a banana plant—hanging down on all sides. He was told, “That’s a *shita* tree.” Additionally there are many mulberry trees, on which mistletoes also sprout. No wonder it could be called a sort of Shangri-la. Especially the exquisiteness of their fabrics is unlike anything found on other islands. When they take the silk from silkworms they do not use a wheel but twine it on their fingers. The most common colors for dying include yellow, reddish-yellow, and black, these three. For yellow, during the period between the seventh and ninth months *kariyasu* grass¹³ is boiled and the cloth is dipped in the dye thirty or forty times, and finally the color is brought out using the ash of camellia. Reddish-yellow is produced during autumn and winter by boiling the bark of a tree called *matami* and dipping the cloth thirty times. The color is brought out using the same method. Black dye is produced year-round by boiling the bark of the chinquapin oak tree and dipping the cloth twenty-four or -five times. The color is brought out using mud from the paddies. These methods of producing fabric are the ancient legacy of *Kure-hatori* [Wu weaving] and *Aya-hatori* [Han weaving]¹⁴ and have been handed down from the girls Xu Fu left on the island. But up to now they had not paid tribute to any country and had no way to conduct trade, and so they only wove and made clothing for the men who were designated as their husbands on Men’s Island, as well as for their parents and children. They did not work for profit, and were in no hurry. Therefore, the silken fabric they made was more durable than that of any other country.

Seeing and hearing all of this, Tametomo was filled with ever greater admiration and thought that if they would just live together with the men from Men’s Island, then agriculture, fishing, and hunting would also be expanded. When he occasionally proposed such a plan, only Sabori no Nyoko showed signs of approval, while the other women of the island feared the curse of the sea god and were not receptive to the idea. After giving the matter some thought, Tametomo asked a very articulate elderly woman about Nyoko. She replied, “Her mother died this past year. Her father still lives on Men’s Island, but as of yet she has no husband. She is very clever by nature and manly in spirit. According to the customs on this island, a woman who is having her menses—or a woman who is giving birth—constructs a hut called a *taya* in the recesses of the mountains and stays there alone until her period of confinement is over, and is not

¹³ A grass similar to miscanthus.

¹⁴ These two types of weaving were introduced during the reign of Emperor Ōjin from Wu (J. Kure) and Han (J. Aya) respectively.

allowed to return before that. Since she has no freedom in matters of diet and so forth, many develop rheumatism and become ill. Nyoko has always felt distraught about this, but since it is an island custom, there was nothing she could do about it. Last winter, her cousin gave birth and was in a *taya* on the western mountain. Nyoko felt keenly that others were not doing anything for her cousin, who must have found the loneliness unbearable. Thinking one day that she might go secretly and attend to her needs at night, she went to the *taya* to find that there was no child, and her cousin was under a thin blanket weeping bitterly. Finding it strange, Nyoko asked what the matter was, and her cousin replied, 'My mother secretly came by last night and, between the two of us, we were even more short of things to eat. She said that she couldn't come during the day because people would find out, but that if she came nightly to take care of me, no one would know about it. I was delighted and slept soundly that night. But when I woke up, my mother was gone and so was the baby. Finding it strange I wondered what might have happened and wanted to go inquire, but since my period of confinement was not yet over, I could not return home. So I am just given over to imagining all kinds of things.' Finding the matter even more suspicious, Nyoko looked back at the board beneath the entrance and saw a drop of fresh blood and, horrified at the thought that some monster might have taken the child away in its jaws, said things to put her cousin's mind at ease and then ran back to make preparations. Without telling anyone, at dusk she again went to the *taya* and said to her cousin, 'Your baby is not at the main building, and my aunt doesn't seem to know anything about it. You must feel both surprised and distressed, not knowing what has happened. But there is surely some explanation for it. I have some ideas about this, so I'll stay here tonight and take care of you. Even if you're afraid something might happen, just remain calm and watch what I can do.' Nyoko's cousin was even more confused and, her face damp with tears, was at a loss. As the night deepened and the cousin, exhausted from worry, dozed off, Nyoko was behind a sedge screen, her eyes fixed on the outside of the hut in anticipation of the appearance of the monster that night. Just then, there was a slight tapping at the door. No one opened it, but from somewhere or other a strange-looking old woman walked up to the bedside. Nyoko gasped when she looked closely: in form it resembled her aunt, but its eyes had a piercing gleam and its mouth opened from ear to ear, looking like a bowl full of blood. Its disheveled white hair, like pampas fronds on a withered field, hung down to both shoulders as it stood there in the lamplight. After getting a good look at it, Nyoko released the three or four mice she had brought in a bucket. Not letting them out of its



sight, the monster went after them. Seeing that the creature was off its guard, Nyoko ran from behind the screen and plunged a flashing short sword into it. The wounded monster let out a yell, and then disappeared. The cousin awoke with a start at the noise. Nyoko explained what had happened as she wiped the bloody sword. 'I have slain your baby's enemy. It's badly wounded, so even if it gets away, it will be easy to capture. After daybreak I'll get a group together and we'll track it down following the trail of blood.' Hearing all of this, the cousin was amazed and at the same time filled with admiration for Nyoko's valiant spirit. As the eastern sky brightened, Nyoko gathered a group of women and, relating all that had transpired during the night, set out in search of the monster. The trail of blood led them to a mountain on the rocky shore in the southeast part of the island, where they discovered a large cavern. The blood led right into the cavern, and so the women combined their strength to dig around and demolish it. Unable to bear the pain, with a great roar the creature came staggering out. It was a wildcat, nearly seven feet from head to tail. Though Nyoko had cut open its side, it had not yet died, so the women clubbed it to death and threw it into the sea. On this island we had supposed that there were no animals

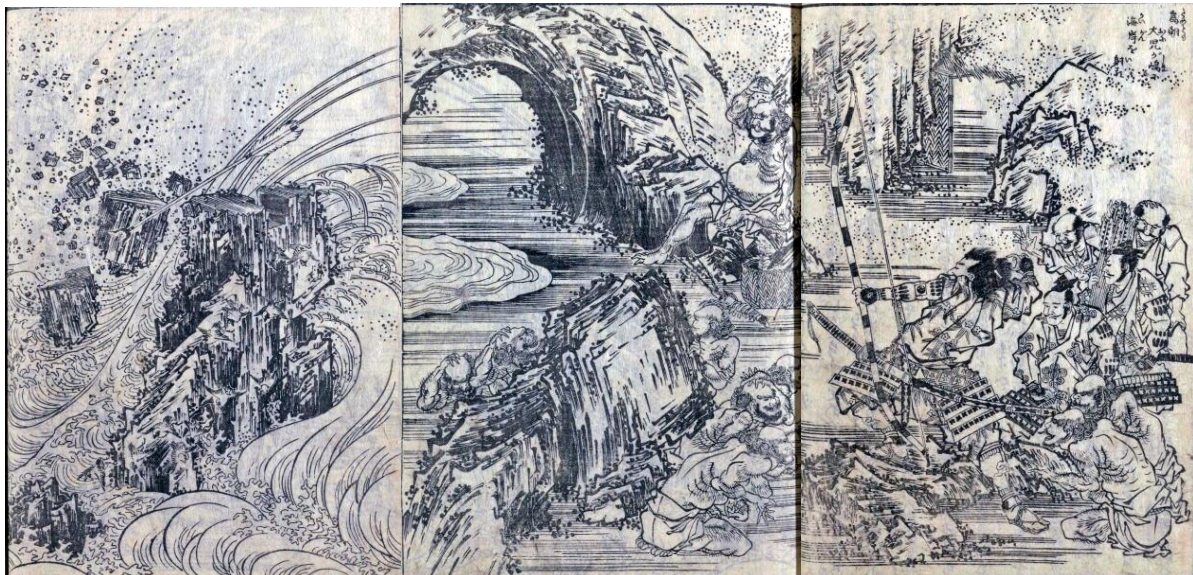
aside from wild oxen and horses, cats and mice, but there is also something called a wildcat. This creature grows to over five feet in length, has short legs and a long tail, and hides in the depths of the mountains where people never see it, only the remains of its meals, such as bird feathers. But when it is hungry it will steal food from the village, and might even snatch away a small child. But that happens only rarely. Since then, everyone has held Nyoko in high esteem for her valor. And since you have come here, everyone is even more amazed at how she could communicate with you in Japanese.”

Tametomo was also delighted to hear of her wisdom and courage. One day he said to Nyoko, “I think it would be good to divide the men on Men’s Island and have half of them come here, and send half the women on Women’s Island there. That would make for better agriculture, fishing, and hunting. But the women on this island are adamantly opposed, and won’t go along with that. It is the great Way of humans to live as couples and the god of the sea is certainly not offended by it. I hear that you still have no husband. I’m not the type who follows lust, but if it’s for the benefit of society, I’ll remain here for a time, take you as my concubine and for the time-being pledge my troth to you. And when the island women realize that no curse has befallen us, they will no longer resist and will live together as couples. How do you feel about that?” Nyoko was delighted. “You think only of society and of others. There would be no greater happiness for someone of my lowly status than to be at your side, even temporarily. But it is with trepidation that I sully your noble flesh.” And soon the two were united. Tametomo remained on the island for over a year, and toward the end of that time Nyoko gave birth to twin boys, Tarōmaru and Jirōmaru. She raised them herself. The island women envied this arrangement and finally came to their senses, muttering, “The old saying that husband and wife living together would incur the curse of the sea god was false. We’ve spent all these years in vain, longing for the love of our husbands. How foolish!” Tametomo was relieved at that and, together with his four crew members, set sail for Men’s Island.

Chapter Eighteen

On a rocky shore in the eastern sea a single arrow subdues the inhabitants,
On Demon's Island Sabori acknowledges the hero.

And so, Tametomo and his crew set out from Women's Island and, rowing toward the south, covered twenty leagues in only half a day, arriving at Men's Island. About five leagues in circumference, the shoreline of this island is even more precipitous than that of Women's Island, but Tametomo thought nothing of it and, spurring his crew onward, managed to bring the boat to shore. Getting off the boat, they saw a rift in the middle of the mountain in front of them, advanced toward it. There was a house of bamboo wicker surrounded by cut branches and with a roof only about three feet tall thatched with reeds. From out of it came forth men looking not quite human and not quite demon, darkened by briny winds to complexions like those of people in India, with eyes glistening like the morning star, running pell-mell toward them. They surrounded Tametomo and his crew, jabbering in island dialect, "There have been many times in the past when boats have drifted here and attempted to come to anchor but were not able to because of the tall rocks. We would just stand on the shore looking on from afar and then run away in fright. But how are you so bold that you got here easily?" Peering at the newcomers' faces, they seemed almost dumbfounded and did not come any closer. Having spent some time on Women's Island, Tametomo had become accustomed to the island dialect, and the speech on this island did not differ. Having understood everything, he smiled and said, "What a racket! Settle down. I am a descendent of Emperor Seiwa, the eighth son of the Rokujō Police



Lieutenant Tameyoshi, Minamoto no Tametomo, but due to certain circumstances I was exiled to Ōshima in Izu province. Now since the islands in the eastern sea are given by the imperial court as part of the provincial domain, in order to complete the regulation of these islands I have come from afar. For you to revere me as your lord and not fail to pay annual tribute would be to your good fortune.” The islanders would hear of no such thing and reviled him, saying, “Whether you’re the eighth son, or Tametomo, or descended from a deity, or are a prince, since you’re an exile you’re of even lower status than we are. How are we obliged to you that we should revere you as our lord, and what bond do we have with you that we owe you yearly tribute? It has been over a thousand years since our ancestors settled on this island, and not even for one generation have we entered into a sovereign-subject relationship with any country. Hey everyone, this guy comes here making a very dignified face, but who can know what kinds of schemes he has in mind? Let’s push him over the cliff into the sea!” The crew members exchanged glances and, half-heartedly jutting out their elbows and squaring their shoulders as if to show that they would not be made light of, were in waiting behind their lord, slightly trembling, their faces as blue as the sea. But showing no sign of agitation, Tametomo signaled with a sidelong glance for his crew to fetch his bow and arrows. Then putting the arrows under his arm, asked, “Which is more solid, that boulder standing on the shore or the bodies of you islanders?” They all laughed loudly. “That question hardly needs to be asked. Our bodies are skin bags filled with blood, much like vessels filled with food. And even if we have solid parts like thirty teeth and twelve ribs,¹ how could we be compared to a boulder?” Before they had even finished speaking, Tametomo took out an arrow with a turnip-shaped head and, pulling his bow taut, sent it whizzing to the center of the ten-feet tall boulder that was shaped somewhat like a cactus. Even outdoing Li Guang who shot at a stone thinking it was a tiger,² the boulder struck by Tametomo’s arrow split in two with a deafening sound. The earth trembled as the broken boulder fell into the water making such a splash that all on land were drenched. Seeing such a spectacle, the islanders turned pale and were at a loss for what to do. They bowed their heads down to the sand and said, “We have never seen such strength with a bow. It is probably of no use now to express regret for having received you so rudely and for threatening your life, but if you will forgive us for our offences, we will do

¹ According to *Sansai zue*, humans have twelve ribs.

² Li Guang (184-119 BCE) was a general of the Western Han dynasty. According to an account in the *Qian Han shu*, when he was out hunting he shot at a rock, mistaking it for a tiger. The arrowhead penetrated the rock.

anything you command. What fearsome strength of the bow!" It was amusing to see how, upon hearing such outpourings of amazement, the crew members also plucked up their courage and, squaring their shoulders even more, assumed an air of pride.

Then one of the islanders named Shiyō Gorō looked back at his comrades and said, "I don't know its source, but recently I heard a rumor that someone named Tametomo would come here, and now that I think about it, the source of that report must have been the god of the sea. Just look at how thick that bow is, and the strength with which he so easily draws it is equal to that of a water buffalo. It would be our good fortune to be allied with such a brave warrior. Just try pulling that bowstring!" Then the crowd responded, "You're not quite the equal of Eastern Shitchō Sabori, but you're stronger than average and are young, so you ought to be able to pull it a bit. It would be impossible for us." Grimacing, Tametomo said, "Well then, try it," and stood the bow upright. Spitting into his palm, Shiyō Gorō grasped the bowstring and, screwing up his face so that his eyes and mouth seemed to come together and focusing all his might on that one moment, pulled for all he was worth. But the string did not move at all. "Come here and help me," he shouted, and the crowd got in on the act. He took it up against his shoulder while the rest held on to his and each others' loincloths in a line like beads on a rosary and pulled combining all their strength, but the bow still did not bend at all. They were pulling so hard from behind, though, that it scraped flesh from the palm of Shiyō Gorō's hand, and when he let go of the string the crowd tumbled backward like dominoes. Tametomo and the crew members could not help laughing.

Just then, from the right along the shore came an islander about forty years of age, his mien as frightening as a *bugaku* mask and his unbound hair in two clumps above his brine-drenched ruddy forehead looking as if he had sprouted horns. His hirsute chest, arms, and legs resembled those of a bear. He was of unusual stature with a countenance reminding one of a red demon. His tattered robe hung around his waist like seaweed. On his head he carried a basket woven from wisteria vines containing four or five bonitos and two lobsters about two feet long. His hands were clasped behind his back as he walked toward them. The crowd laughed upon seeing him. "Hey, Sabori, why are you so late getting here?" They told him all that had happened. "You're famous on this island for your strength. You should try pulling this bow." Then with a displeased look on his face the man said, "Don't add to your guilt by trifling with a nobleman. Recently talk has been going around about that lord and about how we islanders will

gain livelihoods. I have secretly believed those reports and have awaited his appearance, though you all laughed at the idea. But today's events should make it clear. From a distance I listened to your dispute with this gentleman but ignored all that and went and caught these fish. They are of good quality, so boil them or roast them and serve them to him." Then handing the basket to Shiyō Gorō he approached Tametomo and, kneeling before him, said, "I am called Eastern Shitchō Sabori. The people of this island are stubborn and foolish, and are ignorant of nobility. If they thoughtlessly slighted you they intended no spite. The fact that you nevertheless show such mercy means that you have the heart of a buddha. Your advent had been made known to us by a god, and thus you are a god. How could we not revere you? If there is a way we can improve our livelihoods, please instruct us." Indeed, even on isolated islands there are those who are fully human. Though horrible in appearance, they speak with sincerity and appear to be superior to inhabitants of other islands. Tametomo was very pleased, and said, "So, you are Eastern Shitchō Sabori. I have an unusual bond with you, because your daughter, Nyoko, has born two of my children. As I was visiting various islands, in spring of last year I went to Women's Island where I heard the story about Xu Fu and about how, though the women formed bonds with the inhabitants of Men's Island, they fear the curse of the sea god and do not live together. Having pity on their naivete, I argued that conjugal life is part of the Way of being human, and that it will not arouse the ire of the sea god. I argued that if men and women henceforth live together, agriculture, fishing, and hunting will improve, but the women stubbornly rejected the idea. So I wooed Nyoko, took her as my concubine and had two children by her. It was only then that the women, seeing that no curse had befallen us, expressed a desire to live as couples, and so my coming here to this island has no other purpose than to explain this and to get couples to live together. Now looking at this island, since it is smaller by half than Women's Island, I'll take two thirds of the men here and send them over there, and one third of the women there to come here and live, without separating those who have already made vows to each other, so that they can live as couples on the same island. Will you agree to that?" Not only Eastern Shitchō Sabori but all the islanders were greatly pleased, jumping about and saying, "Since ancient times we have waited impatiently for the yearly wind, yearning to be with our wives. Could there be greater happiness than living together as couples without the curse of the sea god? All things considered, you are our god of matrimony. This is wonderful!" The River of Heaven dried up and from that

day hence the two stars could be together constantly.³ Though in dress and appearance they may be different, in practices of love there would be no distinction between capital and island.

Tametomo again addressed Shitchō Sabori, “It is good fortune for all of us that the islanders have not doubted my words. What I still wonder about is the report I heard of a ‘Demon’s Island.’ When I asked the women about it, they said ‘We’ve never heard of any island but Men’s Island.’ But now that I look at your appearance, you’re all ugly and have faces like demons. Is ‘Demon’s Island’ (Onigashima) and ancient mispronunciation of ‘Men’s Island’ (Onoshima)? Or is there a separate island for demons? That’s something I don’t understand.” Eastern Shitchō Sabori replied, “Since this island was first settled by the boys abandoned here by Xu Fu back in the Qin dynasty, even though we’re now grown ups as you see, we still have boyish appearances, and so it was also called ‘Big Boy (*oni* 大児) Island.’ So the ‘*oni*’ does not refer to things like demons or devils, but has the sense of ‘big boys.’ And it’s called Men’s Island because, in contrast to Women’s Island, only men live here, and that is its nickname. As to whether there is another island with real demons on it, I have no idea.” Tametomo nodded and said, “From what you have just said, I understand how it came to be called ‘Big Boy Island,’ but whether it refers to big boys or demons, *oni* doesn’t sound good. And after women come to live here, it can no longer be called ‘Men’s Island.’ Since a lot of thick reeds grow around the rocky shoreline, let’s call it ‘Reed Island.’” The islanders were all pleased with that and soon came to use that name. What was later known as Aogashima is thought to be this Reed Island.

Then Shitchō Sabori invited everyone along with Tametomo and his crew to his home where he entertained them lavishly with fish, fruit, abalone, and other shellfish. Tametomo inquired, “It’s written in Chinese books that when Xu Fu set sail his boat was loaded with all manner of treasures.⁴ Have any of those things been handed down here, since this place is utterly rustic?” Shitchō Sabori replied, “I have heard that anciently even on this island there were such prized treasures as the Five-Colored Dragon Mat, a carpet woven with silver threads, an eight-foot dais made of ivory, a cushion of scarlet damask, a bowl made of agate, vessels of glass, a cape and hat that made their wearer invisible, and a magic mallet that produced treasure when it

³ This refers to the legend of the cowherd and weaver maiden who were lovers. They offended the ruler of Heaven and were turned into stars, Altair and Vega, on opposite sides of the Milky Way (River of Heaven), and were permitted union only once a year on the seventh day of the seventh month.

⁴ There is no mention of treasures in the account of Xu Fu found in the “Qin shi huang benji” chapter of *Shiji*.

struck something. But over a thousand years have passed, and not a single thing has been handed down. And though I hear that we are descended from the people of the Qin, no one can read a single character.” Tametomo felt even greater pity for them, and said to himself, “The saying that ‘upbringing counts for more than lineage’ is indeed true. And just as in ancient times, they carve crude dwellings in the mountainside.” Tametomo stayed there that night and the next day he explored the island under the guidance of Shitchō Sabori, Shiyō Gorō, and others. The islanders all got along well with each other like family, sharing fish they caught with each house. When catches were poor, they would cut the fish into small cubes and distribute them evenly, leaving no one out. They were honest, unselfish, and acted with sincerity in all matters. Also, a bodhisattva statue created by Kōbō Daishi⁵ had at some time or other been brought to this island. On the back of it his note was inscribed: “On the seventh day of the seventh month of the year Tenchō [830] I offered ten thousand cedar sticks to Benzaiten⁶ on Enoshima. I used the ashes to create this statue. Kūkai.” Tametomo did not doubt it and said, “This is a sacred treasure.” The islanders all happily followed Tametomo’s command, and a third of them accompanied him to Women’s Island.

⁵ Also known as Kūkai (774-835), a celebrated Buddhist monk and founder of the Shingon sect in Japan.

⁶ Sarasvatī, a female Buddhist divinity.

Chapter Nineteen

With martial strength, Tametomo wards off the god of smallpox,
Convicted of crime, Tadashige loses his ten fingers.

Chinzei Hachirō Tametomo led Eastern Shitchō Sabori, Shiyō Gorō, and others from Reed Island back to Women’s Island. Overjoyed, the women all assembled on the shore to greet them, helping steer the boat in. There were reunions with parents and siblings, and invitations of spouses and children to their various homes where the newcomers were attended to. It would be impossible to record their voluminous conversations after such long absences. Addressing her father Sabori, Nyoko expressed joy at their mutual health and safety, and related how, benefitting from Tametomo’s leadership, it came about that men and women could be together. “Quite unexpectedly I was able to serve that lord, and even bore him two boys.” Smiling broadly, Sabori said, “I have already heard that news. Now let me see them.” Then taking Tarōmaro and Jirōmaro into his arms one after another and looking them over, he turned to Nyoko and instructed her saying, “Though people on various islands have richly benefitted from the young master’s presence, it’s nothing like the blessing of parent and child. Take good care in raising these two boys.”

Tametomo also divided the women and sent some of them to Reed Island, making both islands places of union of *yin* and *yang*. He sang to himself:

Inishie mo na o nomi kikishi watatsumi no Yomogigashima o tazuneteshi gana

Having only heard its name from former times,

how I should like to go there—Yomogi Island out in the open sea.¹

and could not have been happier, feeling that everyone looked up to him as their leader and that he had accomplished most everything he had set out to do. One day he said to Nyoko and her father, “It has been over a year since I tentatively ventured to this island, and soon I must return to Ōshima. I entrust the care and upbringing of these children to both of you.” Nyoko was then dejected, saying, “If you return to Ōshima, you’ll never come back here. If you’re afraid of what people in society might say, then there’s nothing I can do about that, but at least please take one of these two children with you.” Tametomo replied, “No, my not taking you with me isn’t just

¹ This verse appears in vol. 36 of *Fuboku waka shō*, and in *Munetaka Shinnō kashū*, no. 126.

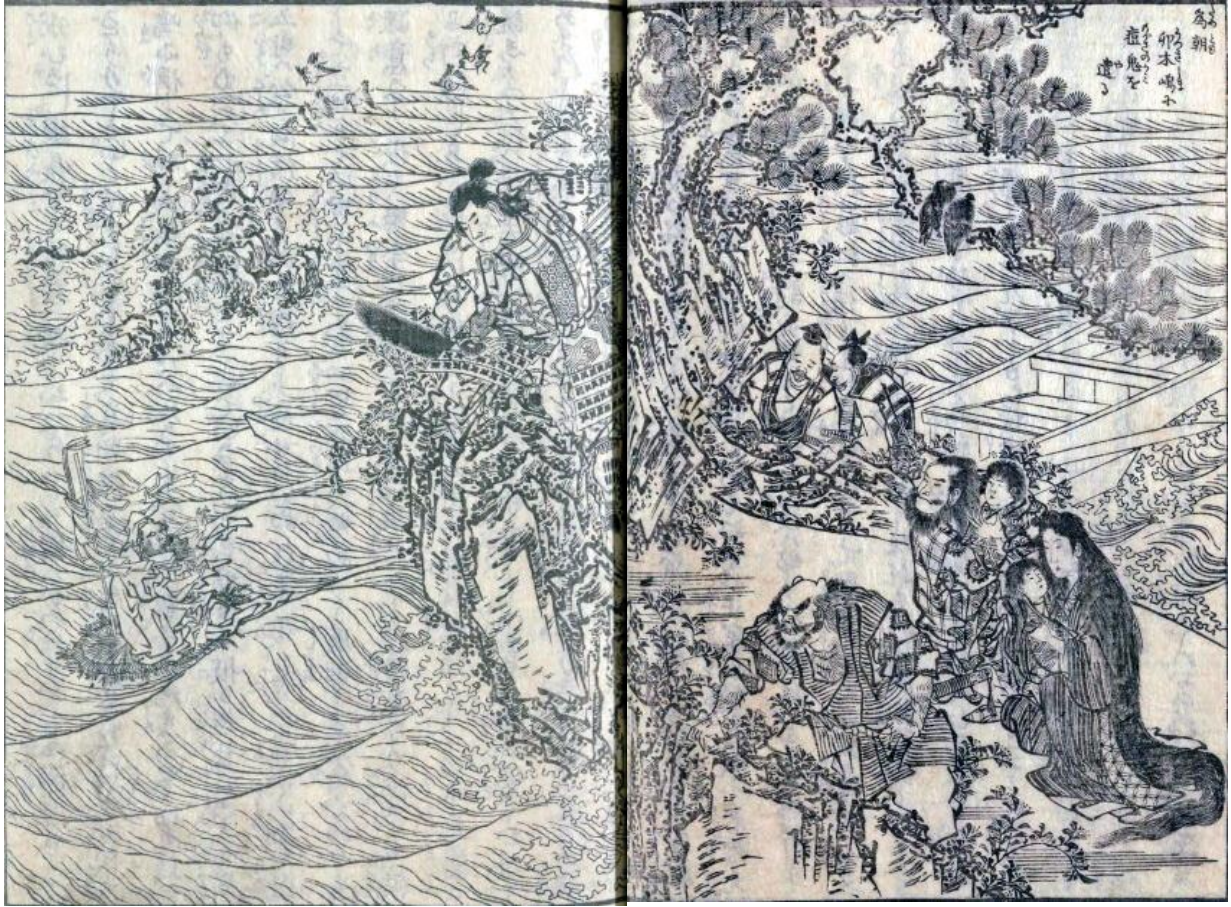
because I fear what people might say. After hearing that my lawful wife, Shiranui, was killed in Kyushu during the Hōgen uprising, I had no desire to remarry, but I was unable to decline the sincere devotion of Sasarae in Ōshima, and she has born three of my children. And in order to instruct the women of this island I took you as a concubine. But are not all of these tentative relationships? If I took you back with me, that would mean that Tametomo has lost himself in amorous adventure and is given over to lasciviousness. How, then, could I provide instruction to the islanders? It is my intention to leave the children here.” Unable to respond to that, Nyoko dissolved in tears. Then Shitchō Sabori spoke, “What the young master has said is entirely within reason. But though you have been in Ōshima for a long time and have won the hearts of its people, unless they are your most trustworthy retainers, they will tend to their own interests. Even if you leave Nyoko and the boys here, I shall attend you no matter where you go.” Tametomo smiled and said, “I appreciate your devotion, but if you were to accompany me to Ōshima, Nyoko would have even less support. Please consent to stay here with them.” Before he could finish speaking, Shitchō Sabori drew nearer and said, “No, that would not be a hindrance. Her cousin’s husband, Shiyō Gorō, is a very trustworthy man, and especially since she killed a wildcat a few years ago for the sake of his child, Shiyō Gorō and his wife were deeply grateful, and there is not a trace of reserve between them. Shiyō Gorō and his wife are both now on this island and will supply unfailing support for your boys. Please leave all of that up to me.” Then he summoned Shiyō Gorō and his wife and explained the matter in detail. Without hesitation they agreed to the plan, saying, “Please put your mind at ease, young master. We shall defend Nyoko and the boys with our very lives and raise them so that they’ll be looked up to as leaders on this island.” Assured by their obvious devotion, Tametomo raised no further objections. It was finally decided that Shitchō Sabori would accompany him, but his name was too long and complicated to use elsewhere, so Tametomo named him Oniyasha, because his face resembled that of a demon warrior (*yasha*). They say that the people of the land of Kafuri possess a naïve honesty and are extremely loyal,² and thus barbarians of both the north and the south prize them as slaves, regardless of the cost. And therefore neither did Tametomo mind the homely appearance

² This observation is based on a description in *Hachijō hikki*, where the land of Kafuri is described as being part of Rimia, a place left undefined, though its characters are used in Chinese to transliterate “Libya.” *Hachijō hikki*, describes its inhabitants as honest to a fault and loyal, and thus prized as servants, noting that people of Hachijō share these same qualities.

of Shitchō Sabori, seeing that his character was in no wise inferior to that of Half-mile Stone-thrower, and treated him with great favor.

Thus Shitchō Sabori was greatly pleased that his wish was fulfilled, and from that day forth was known as Oniyasha. The islanders all envied him, and Nyoko presented to her father as a farewell gift clothing of island silk she had woven herself. They waited two or three days for fair winds and then Tametomo, his crew, and Oniyasha weighed anchor. For the islanders it was like parting from parents, and they assembled on the shore to see them off. Looking over the crowd, Tametomo said, “With so much going on, there’s one thing I forgot. Since henceforth couples will be living together here, it makes no sense to call it ‘Women’s Island.’ What should its name be?” Nyoko replied, “All of the islanders dearly love the young master, and so rather than choosing this name or that, with all due respect this island should be named after you. I’ve had more good fortune than I could have hoped for, and the other women have been able to meet their fathers and brothers and couples are living together in harmony. I alone have no brothers, my father is leaving, and I am being abandoned by you. But if this island with its rocky shore bears your name—if it is called Hatchō Island—then I’ll be able to feel that I am living with you.” Then she burst into tears, as did also the young master. Everyone present, whether closely or distantly related, agreed with what she proposed, and so from that time forth Women’s Island changed its name to Hatchō Island, and as things change over the course of time it came to be mispronounced, and what is now known as Hachijō Island is this same place.

About two leagues west of Hatchō Island lies a small ancillary island. Nyoko was so grieved at parting that, gathering Tarōmaru and Jirōmaru in her arms and having Shiyō Gorō punt a small boat, she went to that island to see Tametomo off. He, too, for a time stopped at that island and, perceiving Nyoko’s feelings and wishing to console her, broke off a sprig of deutzia that happened to be growing out of the base of a boulder and, planting it in the ground, vowed, “If it is the case that I’ll someday come back, this deutzia will take root and live.” It did indeed take root. And thus that island is even now known as Deutzia Island, but they say that Nyoko, praying that her lord would come again, called it Kojima (Come Island 来島 or Little Island 小島).



Just then, from the open sea there drifted at the mercy of the waves the lid of a straw rice bag to which was affixed a staff with red zigzag paper offering streamers.³ On the lid was riding a withered old man no taller than a foot and a half. Tarōmaru and Jirōmaru both began crying loudly as if they had seen a nightmare. Glaring at the old man, Tametomo demanded, “What are you? A water fiend or a land fiend? Depart from here now!” The old man was very frightened and bowed low on the lid, saying obsequiously, “I am neither a mountain imp nor a water sprite, or any such thing. I am what is known as the god of smallpox. Recently I have been spreading smallpox between Kyoto and Osaka, but I was sent away from Osaka Bay to drift on the ocean. I had heard that smallpox was unknown on these islands and thought to rest here, but have unexpectedly encountered your commanding martial power and cannot very well go on land. Please pardon me. After this I shall also command my minions not to come here.” At that, Tametomo’s visage softened somewhat and he said, “That is as it should be. My children live on these islands. Not only that, but if such an affliction were suddenly to appear among islanders

³ Zigzag paper streamers (*nusa*) on a staff are typically offered to Shinto deities.

who have never known of it, there would be many deaths not decreed by fate. Never come to these islands again! I'll see you off!" Then pulling him away with his boat, Tametomo returned to Ōshima, and then again sent the old man to the provincial offices of Izu. Thus, even today it is said that there is no smallpox on Hachijō Island, and that owes to Tametomo's outstanding martial prestige.

But to return to our story, bidding Nyoko, Shiyō Gorō, and the others farewell, Tametomo again boarded his boat. Nyoko continued to cling to his sleeve, but Oniyasha pulled her away, though without the feelings of a demon, and told Shiyō Gorō to row her small boat back to the island while Tametomo's large boat was rowed out onto the open sea.

Now the inhabitants of Mitsuke, Kōzu, and Mikura islands all assumed that since so much time had passed with no word after Tametomo left in search of Demon's Island, he had either been swept away by the black current or had been devoured by demons, and they were lamenting his loss. When they heard that he had returned safely accompanied by a demon child, they were both amazed and delighted, and assembled on the shore, eagerly awaiting his arrival. Then leaving on Mitsuke Island the two crew members from there and rewarding them amply, he visited other islands, staying several days at each before finally returning to Ōshima.

On Ōshima during the past spring a full year had passed since Tametomo departed on his trip to visit various islands, and with his protracted absence Sasarae's anxiety grew until she sent someone to Toshima and Niishima to see if they could get any information, but no one knew anything. Tamemaru, Tomowaka, and Shimakimi were old enough to understand things, and daily the three of them together would ask, "Where is father? Will he come home today? Or tomorrow?" It pained their mother to hear such questions, and her sleeves were too sodden to take more tears. But while his daughter was wasting away with worry, Saburō Tayu Tadashige was rather pleased with Tametomo's absence and, after a while returning to his old habits and doing as he pleased, he acted as though Tametomo would never return. Though he berated his son-in-law in front of everyone, they refrained from responding and just kept quiet. But they yearned for Tametomo's good qualities, whispering to each other how much they missed him. When Tadashige heard of that, he was enraged, saying that he alone was in charge of things, and the islanders begrudgingly complied. Tadashige returned to Mochimitsu's service, and though no command was issued from the provincial offices, he thought to ingratiate himself and went to the headquarters in Izu. There he apologized for his past offences and promised to double the tribute

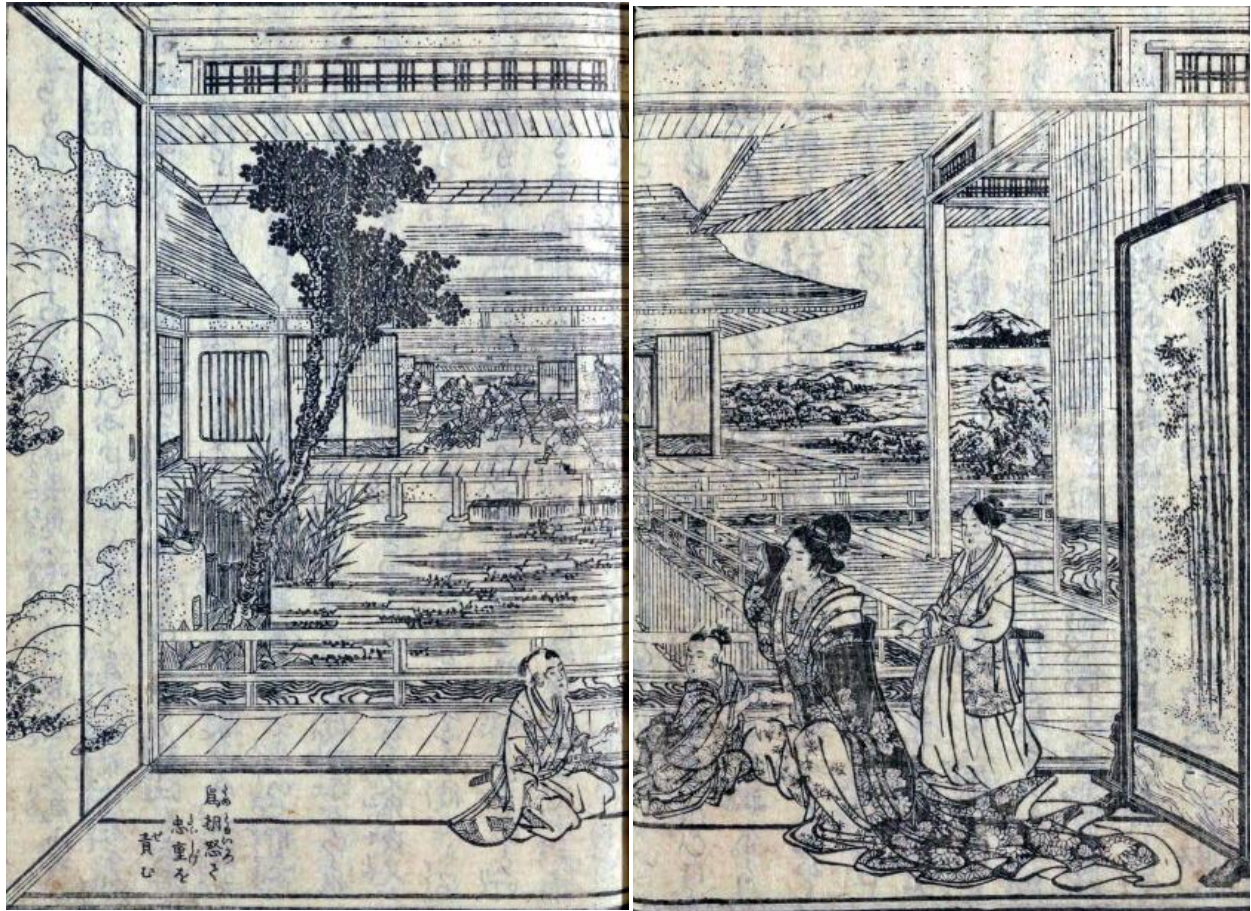
from what it had been formerly. Mochimitsu's long-standing rancor was immediately assuaged. He forgave Tadashige with the warning "Henceforth take care not to neglect tribute." Tadashige returned to Ōshima in high spirits and from all the islands demanded tribute to Mochimitsu according to plan.

Then from the end of the fourth month of that year, the islanders suddenly became enlivened as a rumor spread that the young master, who had been on Women's Island and Demon's Island since the previous year, had returned accompanied by a demon child. Sasarae quickly got word of this and said, "Isn't this a dream? Children, rejoice! Your father has come back. I must inform my father." She sent a messenger to Tadashige's house and then together with her three children, retainers, and islanders went out to stand on the shore. They waited a long time, wondering if this boat or that might be his. Upon hearing that Tametomo would return safely, Saburō Tayu Tadashige was very surprised, but more than a year had passed since Tametomo had left the island and there had been no word from him, so rumors that he would soon return were hard to make sense of. Outwardly he remained calm, telling himself that this was likely something the islanders had invented to startle him.

But Tadashige's supposition proved wrong that evening when Tametomo's boat reached the shore and he disembarked together with a demon child, which was even more amazing. Pretending to be ill, Tadashige did not go out to meet him. After Tametomo got off the boat, the islanders lined up along the path to welcome him. To begin with, they congratulated him on his safe return and then told how sorely they had missed him for so long. They also told him about Tadashige, sparing no details. Tametomo in turn explained that the need to instruct the inhabitants of Women's and Demon's Islands resulted in a much longer absence than he anticipated. He finally returned to his home in Noshima Village along with Sasarae, Tamemaru, Tomowaka, and Shimakimi. The children could not have been happier, as well as Sasarae, who had been sick with worry since the year before. Tametomo also told her about Nyoko, Tarōmaru and Jirōmaru, and then summoned Oniyasha, saying, "This is Nyoko's father, Eastern Shitchō Sabori, but for here he'll go by Oniyasha." He described their devotion to one another as parent and child. Sasarae did not appear to be at all jealous, nor was she repelled by Oniyasha's strange appearance. She said ever so politely, "My own worries are nothing compared to yours, since your daughter is left by herself and you must be terribly worried about Tarōmaru and Jirōmaru." Oniyasha was in turn impressed with Sasarae's intelligence. That evening lord and vassal, father

and children, and husband and wife made merry with saké, and Tametomo lavished many gifts on the two retainers who had accompanied him to the islands.

The next day, after hearing the islanders' complaints, Tametomo summoned Saburō Tayu, who at first declined to respond, but upon Tametomo's repeated insistence begrudgingly appeared. Grabbing the sides of Tadashige's *hakama*, Tametomo forced him into formal posture and, glaring at him for a time, said angrily, "My touring of the islands was not for my children's benefit, nor for my own. But you took advantage of my absence to do as you pleased, oppressing the islanders. And by whose leave did you curry favor with Mochimitsu? Speak up!" Tadashige answered without hesitation but secretly sneering, "I do not consider any of that to be a matter of your command. As chief of this island, how can I let crimes go unpunished? Complaints of oppression are mere slander. And as for my dealings with the provincial government, in the spring of last year you set out on what was supposed to be a short voyage, but there was no word from you, and not knowing whether you were dead or alive, I had to care for you little ones. And though they are young, they are the offspring of an enemy of the imperial court. Relying on my own resources, I was not able to resist Mochimitsu. And so I appeased him and saved the necks of your little ones." Greatly enraged, Tametomo said, "Hey Tadashige, even if you had no word from me for a year and three months, it's disloyal of you to forget your pledge so quickly and, without ascertaining whether I was still alive, to do everything according to your own desires. And then to cover your own guilt, you go to the opposite extreme of saying that it was to save the necks of the children. But are they not the children of a warrior? As such, rather than run away from things it is better to face death. It is not worth living if you have to obsequiously flatter an enemy to save a life that is destined for death. Yesterday when you failed to appear making the excuse of illness, I guessed right away that you had a guilty conscience. If you were not Sasarae's father, I would decapitate you on the spot, but I will make an exception and spare you. But if you continue to defy me, I shall not be so lenient." Then apparently having been given orders previously, four or five retainers rushed out from their hiding places and, securely grabbing both of Tadashige's wrists, cut off his ten fingers one at a time using a large clipper. Then they sent him home. From the hallway, Sasarae fixed her gaze on him, concluding that that was as it should be, that given her father's fault of not listening to remonstrations, she could not



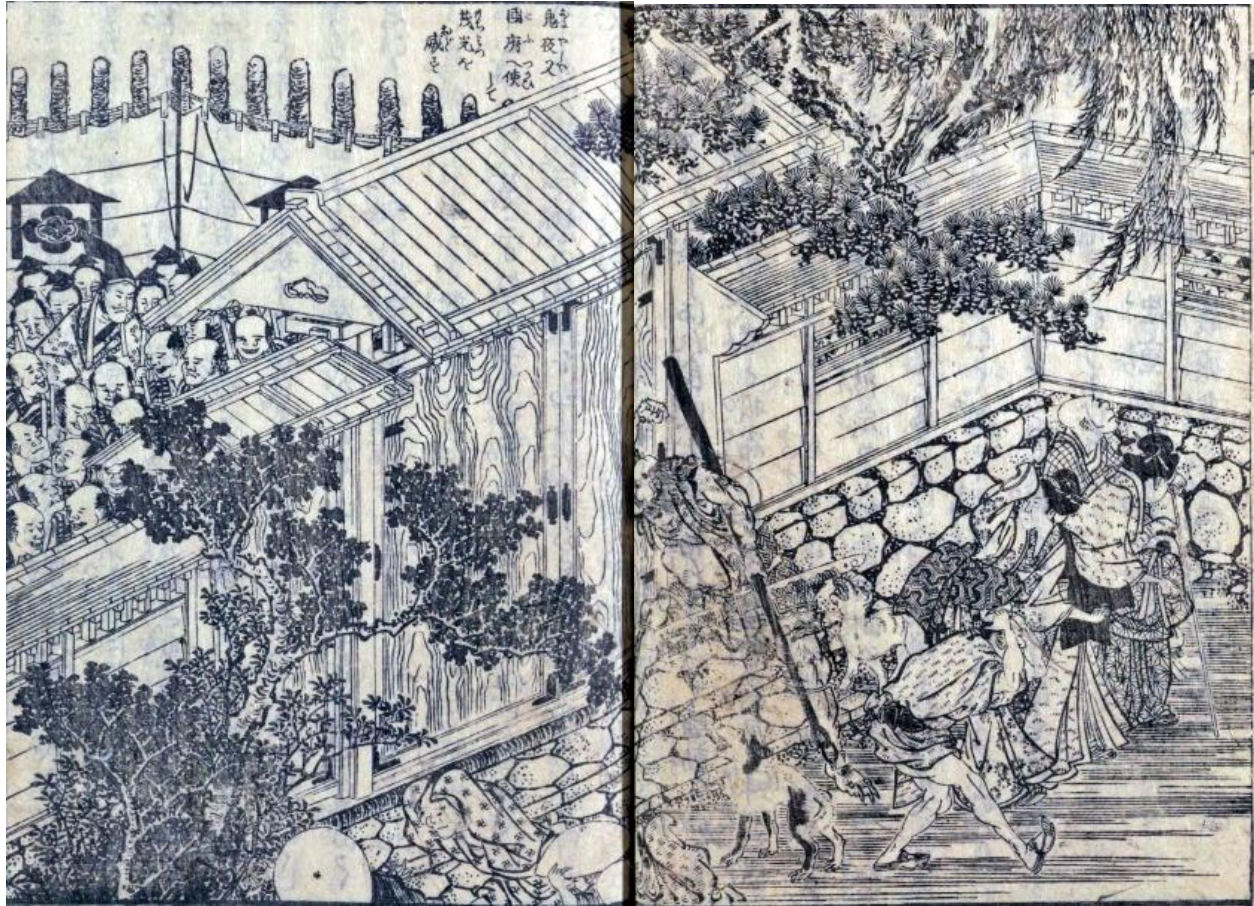
very well take his stripes in his stead. But she felt as if she herself had been cut, and went off by herself to cry. Like a chip *not* off the old block,⁴ she could only drench her sleeve with tears. Only the heart of one in this transient world is unlike a parent. Then remonstrating with his master, Oniyasha said, “Won’t it rather make Tadashige more vicious that you have cut off his fingers to punish him? As I carefully observe his plight, he will be so resentful of you that he’s sure to shift his attachments to Mochimitsu. From this day forth his intentions will become apparent, and so please destroy all the armaments, bows, and arrows in his possession. That way, even if his allegiance shifts to Mochimitsu, he won’t be able to do anything. Even if he planned to assassinate you, he would lack the means to do so. Disaster can come from within. Please be circumspect.” Tametomo immediately did as Oniyasha suggested and confiscated all of Tadashige’s armaments.

⁴ *Oni no ko no minomushi* in the original. This phrase come from the proverb *oya ni ninu ko no wa oniko* (A child unlike its parent is a demon child).

From that time forth, the palms of Tadashige's hands were red and fingerless, like a coral without branches. Enduring the pain, he ran back home, cursing and raging under his breath, "It was because I showed pity on him when he was exiled here that he brought these islands under his domination. Though he is the beneficiary of such great favor—and though he commits such inhuman acts by sheer force—were it not for me he would be as helpless as a jellyfish without a shrimp.⁵ How could he have gotten by on his own? How could I not let him know of my resentment?" Secretly waiting for his wounds to heal he kept an eye out for an opportune time, but with no armaments and with no boats available, there was nothing he could do but confine himself to his quarters and stew in his anger.

Tametomo loathed Mochimitsu's character which, quite unbecoming of a warrior, allowed him to humor Tadashige in order secretly to increase tribute, and decided that he needed to be given a fright. So, he used makeup to give Oniyasha an even more shocking mien and had him go to the provincial offices in Izu casually, as if not intended. When the people there saw the seven-foot creature with a face like an ogre and with two lumps on its head resembling horns walking about as it pleased like a red demon in broad daylight, they all ran about in confusion, whether of high or low estate, whether young or old. Announcing himself as the young master's messenger, he arrived at Mochimitsu's private residence. Mochimitsu and his retainers were startled and suspicious, cursing and saying, "So, the rumors were true. Tametomo went to Demon's Island and brought a demon child back with him. It can turn itself into anything, so be

⁵ One of Bakin's habitual phrases, based on the belief that jellyfish, having no eyes, depend on shrimp to find their way about.



careful dealing with it, and don't botch things." They locked the door from the inside and wouldn't let him in. Laughing to himself, Oniyasha returned to Ōshima, where he reported in full to Tametomo, who was delighted to hear of it. This became another reason for Mochimitsu to make false accusations against Tametomo.

Chapter Twenty

Tadashige secretly runs away to the Izu provincial office,

Yoshiyasu sends a letter to the site of exile in Ōshima.

Spring again arrived, and in the second year of Kaō [1170], Tametomo's inheriting son Tamemaru turned nine and so, choosing the auspicious day of the twenty-second of the first month, they initiated him into manhood, giving him the name "New Young Man of the Island" Tameyori. This was celebrated with a feast lasting three days and three nights, and included Oniyasha and all lesser retainers. Saké and meat were shared with all the islanders without exception, and everyone ate and drank their fill, expressing their felicitations.

But ever since her father had been convicted of crimes, Sasarae had spent those three or four years confined in her home and could not join in such celebrations. She was not happy with the situation and when the opportunity presented itself she pleaded with Tametomo to lessen his sentence, but he would not hear of it. However, he could not continue to ignore her feelings of filial piety and on the third day sent Oniyasha to summon Tadashige. Sasarae was relieved, and thanked him saying, "If you forgive what is unforgivable, then how could even my evil-hearted father not mend his ways? And it all owes to your good grace." She had been waiting long for her father to appear when Oniyasha finally arrived. He approached Tametomo, and with an air of anxious anticipation Sasarae asked, "My father must have been very happy to receive such an unexpected messenger. Why is he not with you? He has aged greatly since last year and is now past sixty. Is he too old and frail to move about? I'm very worried about him." With a very uncomfortable look on his face, Oniyasha replied, "When I arrived at Tadashige's dwelling, no one was there. Since it all seemed so suspicious, I asked some of the islanders in the vicinity. No one knew anything definite, but last night a fishing boat suddenly disappeared. They said that all things considered, Tadashige had probably run away to the Izu provincial offices accompanied by his retainers. If that's true, then it's a very grave matter, and so I hurried back here." This was all contrary to what Sasarae had expected, and with a flushed face she bent down, pressing her hands to her forehead. Hearing this report, Tametomo deliberated for a moment and then said mockingly, "He must have looked for a moment during our festive drinking bout a few days ago when our watchmen let down their guard and ran off to the provincial offices with his retainers. But even if he receives Mochimitsu's aid, I have my bow and arrows here. It's nothing to worry

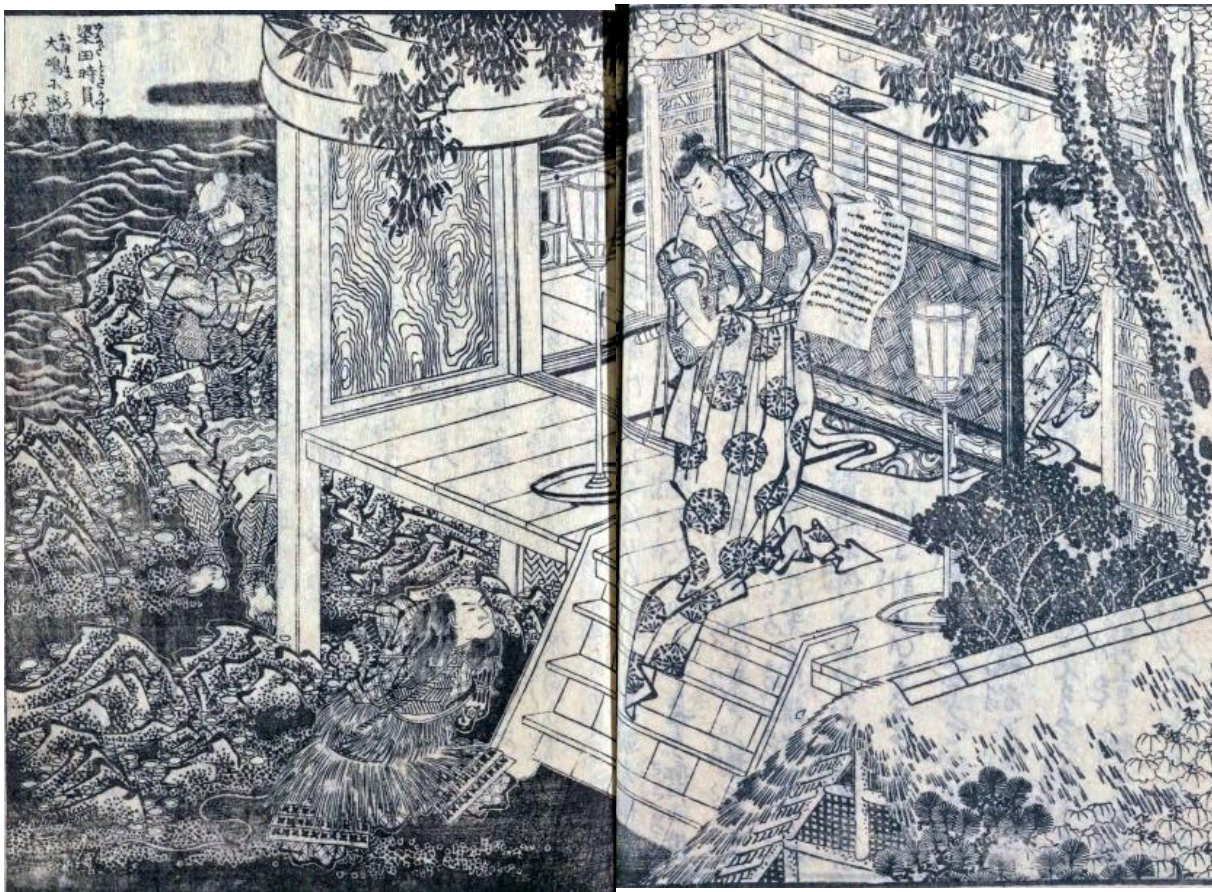
about. Just let him go.” With a worried expression, Oniyasha said, “Mochimitsu’s military tactics might be nothing to worry about, but if he’s clever enough to enlist the aid of imperial troops, then warriors of the eastern provinces would be allied with him and they would be a large force under an imperial command. It would be the height of humiliation to be defeated because of inadequate defense. Consider the futures of your boys. Whether to retreat or advance, you should make preparations now.” Nodding, Tametomo said, “What you say is very reasonable, but it is not my intention to allow myself to be bound to parental affection and pursue unmanly courses of action and lose the honor I’ve always maintained. Although we did not use good strategy during Hōgen and I alone survived to become the overseer of remote islands, it was always my goal somehow to rescue the New Cloistered Emperor, see him reinstalled in the capital with his reign restored, and bring to fruition my father’s devotion to that cause. Now that his majesty has passed away, that longstanding desire is also lost, but even so I cannot allow Mochimitsu to prevail. I can kill all of them by sheer dint of effort, and no preparation is necessary. If we end up facing an imperial army, then I shall honorably disembowel myself and expose my corpse on this island and prove my loyalty through my death. Though Tadashige is an insufferable fool, I am well aware of Sasarae’s sincere devotion to him. If she wishes to escape to the provincial offices to be with him, she may quickly take her leave now. I shall not hold it against her.” Tearfully, she responded, “I am surprised to hear you say that. Anciently it was said, ‘To have one night of my lord’s affection I would willingly trade a hundred years of life.’¹ Since I am unable to clear your doubts about my loyalty, I shall submit to the blade to respond to my lord’s affections.” She immediately took a dagger out of her sleeve and held it to her throat when her three children grabbed her hand and crying bitterly stopped her. Sasarae, too, could bear it no longer and began wailing. Oniyasha took the blade from her hand and, sheathing it, remonstrated with her, saying, “Now that our obsessed lord knows of your sincere devotion, he will not compel you to part from him, so there is no need for you to take your life. That would rather be like reproaching him. Don’t make such an error while you are in a state of confusion.” Unable to die, Sasarae was bent over with weeping. Oniyasha then raced about having thought of horses, provisions, and a way to escape, and should it become necessary, Tametomo should take his children and flee to Reed

¹ This phrase appears in *Baishi wenji*.

Island or Hatchō Island. Without telling anyone, he secretly prepared a large boat stocked with all necessities, leaving nothing out.

While such things were going on, spring passed without any change and it was already the beginning of the fourth month. There was no word from Mochimitsu or Tadashige. Even on islands out in the distant sea where whales bellow, warm halcyon days followed one after another with little wind and calm waters. With time on their hands the islanders hardly knew what to do. They approached Tametomo, who allowed them to take their fishing boats out. They were too late for the sea breams that appear in the waters when the cherries are in bloom, but it was the beginning of bonito season. One day around dusk as Tametomo was returning along the Okada shore where nets were being hauled in, Oniyasha came out to meet him and said in a low voice, “A while ago as I was patrolling the shore I arrested a suspicious man. He was in a fishing boat and was wearing a sedge hat and a straw raincoat, but underneath that he was wearing armor. I guessed that he was probably Mochimitsu’s spy. Without further ado I tied him up and brought him back. He remains silent even when aggressively interrogated, and will only say ‘I’ll explain matters clearly when I meet with the young master.’ How shall we deal with him?” Saying “Bring him out,” Tametomo went to the back room and after changing clothes went out to the veranda. Keeping hold of the rope, Oniyasha brought the man out in front of the veranda and forced him to sit. Tametomo then had several lamps lit to get a good look at the man. He was about six feet in height with bright, clear eyes, a slight beard around his mouth, and a straw raincoat around his body. Though he was in the guise of a fisherman, he was wearing armor and was obviously no ordinary person. After glaring at him for some time, Tametomo asked, “Are you a spy for Mochimitsu? Why did you allow yourself to be arrested so easily?” Showing no sign of fear, the man answered, “I am not a spy for Mochimitsu, but that does not mean that I am not a spy. I have something to tell you in private. Please have these other people withdraw.” Though even more suspicious, Tametomo had Oniyasha and the other retainers leave, whereupon the man drew closer with his knees and said in a low voice, “I am a retainer to Ashikaga Yoshiyasu² from Shimotsuke. My name is Yanada Jirō Takikazu. Having received a command from my lord Yoshiyasu, I have come to deliver an important message to you. It is not necessary for me to relate it in detail. A letter from Yoshiyasu is hidden in my collar. Please take it out and

² Also known as Minamoto no Yoshiyasu (1127-1157), son of Yoshikuni (1082-1155) and founder of the Ashikaga clan.



read it.” That was quite unexpected for Tametomo, but he gently opened Tokikazu’s collar and indeed there was a letter there. He broke the seal and read it. in essence it said, “I, Yoshiyasu, am of the lineage of Emperor Seiwa, and a grandson of Lord Hachiman. (Yoshiyasu is the son of Yoshikuni, who is the third son of Hachiman Tarō Yoshiie, and thus identifies himself as a grandson of Lord Hachiman. And Tametomo is the eighth son of Tameyoshi, who was the fourth son of Yoshichika, the eldest son of Yoshiie. Tametomo is thus the great-grandson to Yoshiie, but since he is the inheritor of the family headship, he is also counted as a grandson to Yoshiie, and is thus in close relationship to Yoshiyasu.) As the proverb says, ‘When the fox is cooked, the rabbit grieves.’³ What this means is that one fears disaster befalling a companion. In both the Hōgen and Heiji disturbances, over half of the members of the main families lost their lives. Is that not to be lamented? But fortunately, you alone have survived in the world. I have heard rumors that Kudō Kano no Suke Mochimitsu has recently gone to the capital and made false charges against you, saying, ‘Though in exile, Tametomo has assumed a commanding air, has taken control of

³ This has the proverb—originally from *Sanguo yan’i*—backward: “When the rabbit dies, the fox grieves.”

islands under Mochimitsu's jurisdiction, has halted all payment of tribute. Moreover he went to Demon's Island, making a demon child his servant and sending it to the Izu provincial offices where it made sport of frightening both young and old. He shows no fear of your majesty, has no compassion for the common folk, deals out punishments capriciously, and charged the island chieftain Tadashige with a crime, having his fingernails removed and shaving his head. His ruthlessness is without comparison. We prostrate ourselves before your majesty and beg you to issue a proclamation ordering a punitive expedition, adding an imperial army to Mochimitsu's forces so that the island can be subjugated, Tametomo executed, and the people saved from oppression.' Upon hearing this, his majesty was greatly surprised, and granted Mochimitsu's request, commanding all warriors under Hōjō in Izu to join forces with Mochimitsu. Thus, the imperial army is positioned near that island. Although you are a peerless warrior who hits every target you aim at, when even a great building is about to fall, the prop of a single piece of timber will not save it. In the end your bow will be broken, your forces depleted, and father and son will become ghosts drifting in the eastern sea. Though I, Yoshiyasu, am past forty years of age, I still have no child. If you have any pity on my misfortune, please allow me to take one of your sons, and I shall raise him. That way, your martial prestige will be passed on, the Ashikaga family will be established, and one of your posterity will be preserved. Therefore I have sent my trusted vassal, Yanada Jirō Tokikazu, to tell you of this secret wish of mine. If you hesitate and do not act in haste, it will be of no use to regret it later. I have little time to write, and cannot go into greater detail. I beg your pardon. Fourth month of the second year of Kaō. To Lord Hachirō of Ōshima. From Minamoto no Yoshiyasu."

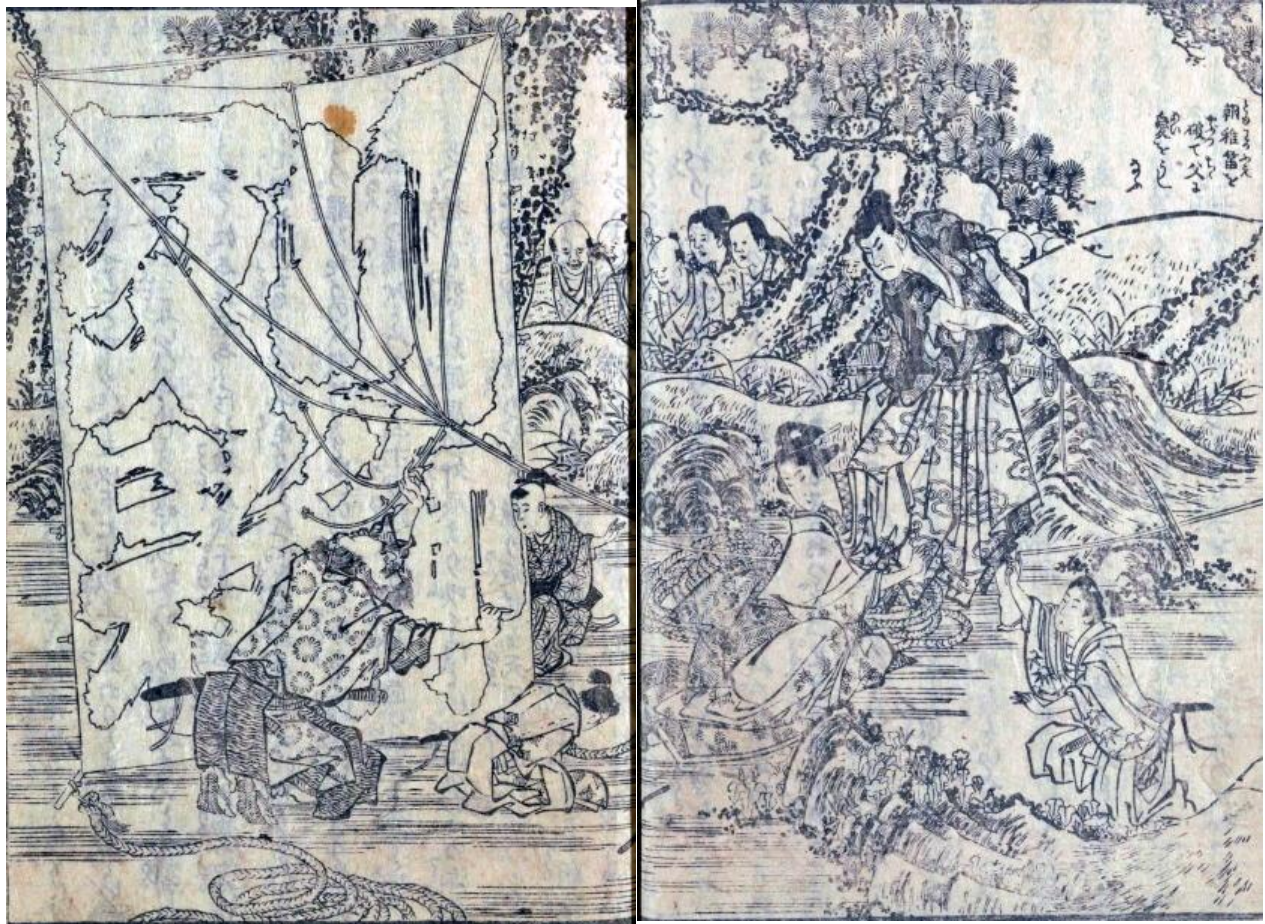
Having read it from beginning to end, Tametomo rolled the letter up and, untying Yanada Tokikazu's bonds, said, "Ever since the Hōgen and Heiji uprisings, the world has seemed to be at peace, but people's hearts are not calm. Not letting down their guard, men use their swords to plow fields while women wear helmets to deliver dried boiled rice to them. Unaware that you were a messenger from Yoshiyasu, you came under suspicion, and we were wrong to treat you harshly. I have long thought that Mochimitsu would make false accusations, as you have now described, and would send an imperial army, so I am not surprised to hear that. When the time comes, it would be better for me to slay my young ones and disembowel myself to preserve my name on this island than to go on living immersed in thoughts about things. But I have not forgotten the bonds to Yoshiyasu's family, and cannot very well ignore his request for my child.

If I were to accede to your lord's wish, I would find it vexing that after my death it would be said that while in exile I was so given over to affection for my child that I sent him off the island to be raised by someone else. It is well known that my oldest son was recently initiated into manhood. My second son, Tomowaka, is only seven years old but is by nature prudent and is in no way inferior to his brother. When I think of that, it's difficult to send him away so suddenly. But leaving it all up to fate, since I'll be giving up Tomowaka, I'll make plans for tomorrow. You wait at the bay in Shimoda and pick him up there. I won't be entrusting him to someone just because I want to spare him, and Yoshiyasu won't be raising any enemy of the imperial court. He will be bestowed by Heaven, and will be Yoshiyasu's child. If, due to some misfortune, Tomowaka is not able to make it to the bay, please consider that to be Heaven-ordained fate. Then return to Shimotsuke and report the circumstances to your lord." Tametomo whispered these things to Tokikazu, who replied with grateful admiration, "You are indeed a once-in-a-generation righteous warrior. Though it is seventeen or eighteen leagues away across the sea, by the protection of our tutelary god Shō Hachiman, Tomowaka will certainly arrive safely. And when I pick up the young lord, I'll let you know with a beacon fire. If smoke arises from a northwestern direction, you may know that the young lord is on his way to Shimotsuke without incident." Tametomo smiled and, taking out a sword, handed it to Tokikazu, saying, "This is a treasured sword named Koshirikaeshi. Please present it to Yoshiyasu as proof. Even if I am unable to repay his kindness in this life, after death I shall become his guardian deity and make the Ashikaga clan flourish. It would not do for others to hear about this, so no further correspondence is necessary. While you can still get away without attracting suspicion, hurry!" Pressed to make haste, Tokikazu politely excused himself and, slipping stealthily out the back door, jumped into the same fishing boat in which he had come and rowed the eighteen leagues to the shore of Shimoda Bay. Lighting a fire, he waited impatiently from the crack of dawn for Tomowaka's arrival.

Chapter Twenty-One

Tameyori plays with a paper kite in the garden,
By a painstaking scheme, Hachirō sends Tomowaka off.

Toward the end of the fourth moth of Kaō 2, “New Young Man of the Island” Tameyori and his brother Tomowaka were constructing a huge kite. They brought Oniyasha out into the garden of the house in Nojima (a place name on Ōshima) and were making merry as they waited for a wind that would lift the kite. From Izu and Sagami westward to Mikawa the construction of kites had become a fine art, resulting in such shapes as beasts or blossoms or whatever struck the builder’s fancy, and from ancient times these were flown not in spring, but rather most popularly at the beginning of summer, around the fifth month. But the inhabitants of Ōshima as of yet knew nothing about such a custom and, drawn by curiosity, gathered about the garden wall to watch. The previous evening, Tametomo had sent Yanada no Jirō Tokikazu back, but had told neither Sasarae nor Oniyasha anything about the circumstances. Since he had already formed a



plan to send Tomowaka away without letting anyone know, when it came time for the boys to have Oniyasha fly the kite, Tametomo came out into the garden and summoned Sasarae and Shimakimi to follow him. Seeing that their father had come, Tameyori and Tomowaka approached him properly and with full respect. Smiling, Tametomo said, “My boys, I’ll launch this kite for you. I hear that by splitting bamboo and pasting paper on it, you can make something huge and wonderful. The first paper kites were made by Han Xin¹ of the early Han dynasty, and they were military instruments used to observe enemy fortifications. And so although you are only playing with this kite, it is actually far superior to something like New Year’s paddleball. But if such a large kite does not have a humming device, it somehow feels incomplete. I’ll let you borrow this, so go ahead and attach it.” Then taking a flute from his pocket, he continued, “It’s this. Long ago, Shinra Saburō Yoshimitsu² (Younger brother to Hachiman Tarō Yoshiie) loved music and studied under Toyohara Tokimoto.³ After he had mastered the art and was taught some secret melodies, Tokimoto gave him this flute. Now even if a musician does not put his lips to this flute, if the wind blows against it, it will play of its own accord, as sweetly as a dragon singing. This is a very precious object, but since you are young you have not yet seen it. Attach it to your kite for a while and let it be the hummer.” Then he handed it to Tomowaka, who gladly put forth his hand to take it but fumbled and dropped it. As it fell on a paving stone, it split in two. The color drained not only from Tomowaka’s face but from all present as a chill swept over them.

Then in a rage Tametomo raised his voice, “Oh, Tomowaka, you’ve always been careless and lacking in restraint, and that’s why you make such blunders. If I go on raising such an imbecile, you’ll eventually bring shame to your parents and sully our family’s name. Don’t move!” Before even finishing his words of abuse, his hand grasped the hilt of his sword. Sasarae and Oniyasha were both thrown into consternation, saying, “Though the boy’s blunder was serious, he is only seven years old. It would be deplorable to harm you own flesh and blood because of a mere flute. We beg of you, forgive him.” Exhausting every phrase they could think of, they apologized for the boy but Tametomo rebuffed them, saying vehemently, “What you say is wrong. It isn’t that I regret the loss of the flute that has been treasured in our family, but can I

¹ 231-196 BCE, military general.

² Minamoto no Yoshimitsu (1045-1127), governor of Kai province, also used the name Shinra because his coming-of-age ceremony was held in the Shinra Zenjidō Hall of Miidera.

³ 1058-1123, fourth son of the famous court musician Toyohara Tokimitsu and noted for his skill with the *shō*.

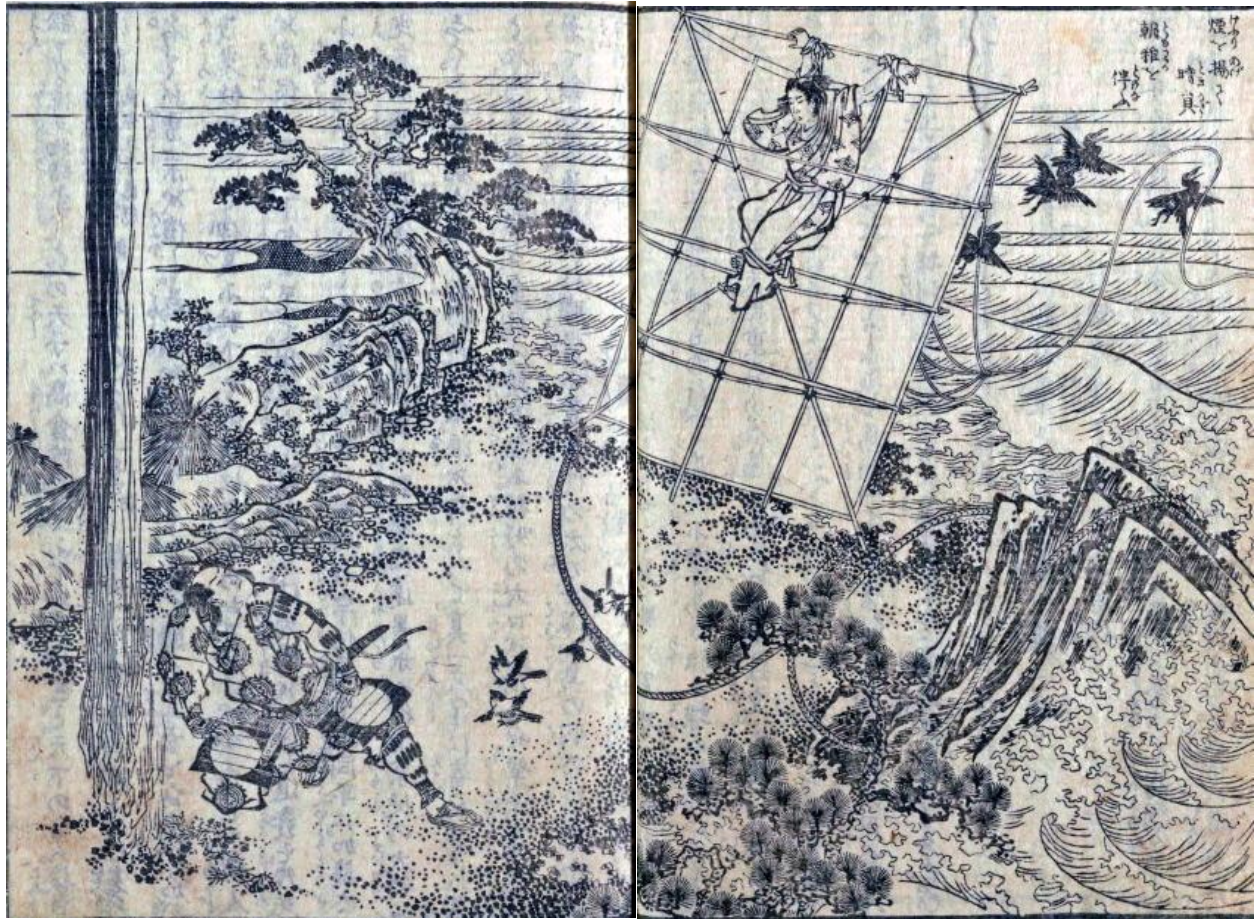
let the misdeed of slighting his father go unpunished because he is young? There is a proverb that says, ‘If you raise a tiger cub, you forget the danger,’ so it is even harder to forgive him because of his youth. And yet, if I completely ignore your protests, I shall be thought of as a merciless parent, and so before all present I’ll sheathe this sword and in place of the flute I’ll tie this wretch to the kite and launch it, entrusting it to the winds. And when it’s high in the sky I’ll cut the string and let it fly free. If by happy chance he falls into a boat out on the waters—or in a port in Izu—then he’ll have beaten the odds and will live. Like a lion that pushes its cubs over a ledge to test their strength, if one dies, the lion does not grieve. So it is with a valiant warrior. Spare me any further remonstrations!” Then grabbing Tomowaka by the collar he tied him to the kite and commanded, “Fly it!” With trepidation bowing deeply before his father, Tameyori said, “Please pardon my impertinence, sir, in the face of your great ire, but until now our coming and going have been as a threesome, and if henceforth we lack Tomowaka we shall know no solace, uncertain whether he is in the depths after having been swallowed by wild waves, or all alone on a distant shore.⁴ And so please, beat me all you like, but spare Tomowaka. But if not, then let all three of us be tied by the cord of the kite and become trash on the bottom of the vast sea. I’m to blame for all of this because making the kite and indulging in idle play was my idea, and for that my brother must perish. This is all too wretched!” Out of filial piety showing no resentment toward his parent, he reproached only himself. Sharing the same sentiments, Shimakimi pleaded in her innocent, childlike manner, “Please forgive him!” Together they drenched their sleeves with endless tears. Hearing this, Sasarae too joined in the weeping and reproached him, saying, “These children deplore even the death of insects crawling on the ground, and yet look at their bravery in unfearingly vowing to die together! However valiant a warrior may be, this is too heartless. Even among the beasts of the field and the fowls of the sky, there is none that does not care for its offspring. Are you of such a strong disposition? How could I, Sasarae, not die in his place to save him?” Oniyasha, too, sucking up his snivel, ran up to Tametomo and added, “It is said that for the very young and the very old, there is no blame.⁵ In other words, it is said that even if someone under fifteen or over seventy commits an offense, he should be pardoned. That is a precept of the age of the sages, and it’s what you’ve always said. So, for such a minor

⁴ This sentence contains some conventional puns (*kakekotoba*), including the *ara* of *araumi* (rough sea) also implying “no” solace, and the *soko* of *araumi no soko* (bottom of the rough sea) and *sokohakanaku* (futilely).

⁵ This loosely paraphrases a line in *Li ji*.

infraction to sink to the bottom of the sea a child who barely knows hot from cold, have you lost your senses? I'll untie him." Pushing him away, Tametomo was enraged and said, "From the time I was thirteen years old I have never killed an innocent person. Your groundless admonition is insolent!" He then took hold of the end of the cord himself and, backing up twenty or thirty steps, pullet the ten-foot square kite up as if it were nothing. Just then a strong wind over the bay blew from the southeast and the kite flew over the waters in the direction of Shimoda, reaching high in the sky to the full length of the cord, looking like a boat rowing toward the Milky Way or the wings of a great bird ascending into the clouds. Tomowaka was on its back. Stupefied and gazing up at it through tears, Tameyori, Sasarae, and the other wondered if the wind might abate, ending the boy's short life. In the meantime, the islanders who had gathered to witness the happenings exchanged glances and, seeing it as the appropriate time to leave, departed one by one.

Then tying the end of the cord to the trunk of a red pine, Tametomo drew his sword and brushed off Sasarae's hand that grasped his sleeve, ignoring her cry of distress. Oniyasha stood in front of him like a shield, stoutheartedly beneath his master's blade, not fearing for his own life. Shoving him away, Tametomo shouted, "Don't block me!" As he raised the blade again, this time Tameyori and Shimakimi held on to him, tugging and rolling about, one side trying to cut the bond of parent-child or lord-vassal and the other side trying to prevent such a cut. But Tametomo was always as good as his word and, spurring on his highest intentions and praying in his heart to the tutelary deity of the Minamoto, Shō Hachiman, to protect his son's life and bring him safely to Shimoda, he jumped over the four who were trying to stop him and, with a flash of the blade, cut the cord. The kite drifted on, now lower now higher, disappearing behind the clouds. The four who would have stopped him fell backwards on their rears and cried "Oh, how piteous!" Just then a cuckoo flew up toward the sky, as if it were Tomowaka's spirit. But then a puff of smoke drifted up from a northwestern direction. It was Tokikazu's signal fire, again slashing in the blue sky. Gazing at it intently, Tametomo smiled in spite of himself. Sasarae and Oniyasha lifted their heads and said, "Now that Yanada no Jirō Tokikazu has sent the signal, Tomowaka has arrived safely at the bay in Shimoda. You must be quite satisfied." Contrary to



what Tametomo expected, they had seen through his secret scheme, and he asked, “So, you both knew about this?” Through her tears, Sasarae explained, “Oniyasha and I eavesdropped and heard the secret messenger from Lord Ashikaga Yoshiyasu tell of the danger you are in because of Mochimitsu’s false accusation. We also overheard you say that you would present one of the boys for him to raise, and so since we knew about it we waited for you to tell us the next day, but you said nothing. Then you pretended that a very common flute was a precious heirloom that had been in the family for generations and caused Tomowaka to break it. And for that blunder you tied him to the kite and, entrusting his fate to the gods, sent him off to Shimoda. How could we resent such a brilliant plan that is discreet toward society but that values reputation? But though he is your child, I carried him in my womb and so I have the same affection for him. And yet you treated me indifferently and kept it all a secret, leaving me to wonder what was going on in your mind, and I felt so wretched.” As she lodged her complaint, Oniyasha blinked the tears away and said, “Though we were already aware of the scheme, you had not said anything to us about it, but we didn’t want to let on, especially since so many islanders were gathered outside waiting to see

the kite lift, we felt that we had to put on an act. Please pardon the impertinence of our remonstrations.” Only then did everything come to light. Lord and vassal were in perfect accord, and Tametomo was filled with admiration. Hearing all of this, Tameyori and Shimakimi were also relieved, saying “So then, Tomowaka has gone off to someone named Ashikaga. We did not know that. Please forgive our impious resentment of you.” With their hands placed formally in front, they apologized. As a parent, Tametomo felt a pang in his heart. And though brother and sister were happy, when the thought occurred to them that they would never see Tomowaka again in this life, their sadness increased. Sighing many times, Tametomo said, “Sasarae, Oniyasha, your resentment is understandable, but it wasn’t because I doubted you that I didn’t tell you. Since I would be sending Tomowaka across eighteen leagues of sea, there was no guarantee that he would make it alive, and misfortune often outweighs good fortune. If he only made it halfway and ended up on the bottom of the sea, my plan would be of no avail. But I thought that if I had let you know from the beginning and the plan ended up failing, your sorrow would be all the greater, and so if I didn’t tell you and you found out, I would lose face. What is painful in this transient world is duty, and what is of little value is a warrior’s disposition.” Moved by the reason of his words, everyone again wept. (Tomowaka’s fate will be treated in detail in a later chapter.)

Just then seagulls suddenly flocked on the open sea and sea lions barked loudly. Tametomo pricked up his ears and, looking back at Sasarae, Oniyasha, and the others, said, “Look, the commotion over the sea means that the boats of the punitive force are swiftly approaching. Set up a watch!” Oniyasha then dashed up a hill and, looking about, said, “It’s an enormous force, over five hundred men on twenty-five or -six boats. The foremost boat has a curtain with a butterfly insignia, so that must be Saburō Tayu Tadashige. The one with the quince insignia is Kudō Mochimitsu, while the one with the three-fish-scale patterns is Hōjō. I can’t make out the emblems on the other banners, but they’re not far from shore. They appear very strong.” Hearing that, Tametomo laughed scornfully. “Then let’s get ready for the end. Sasarae, bring the children and come with me.” They went into the large garden. Firming up his resolve he looked more gallant than ever.

Chapter Twenty-Two

Abandoning the boat, the filial son expresses his resolution,
Setting fire to the residence, the loyal retainer substitutes for his lord.

In spring of the current year Kaō 2, Kano no Suke Kudō Mochimitsu went to the capital and reported to the throne, saying such things as “For a long time now Tametomo has been increasing his military might, even going to Demon’s Island and using a demon child as a slave he has been threatening the populace.” As it is written in *The Tale of the Hōgen Disturbance*, “It was during the reign of Cloistered Emperor Takakura (posthumous name Norihito) when matters of state were under Cloistered Emperor Goshirakawa (Takakura’s father, having taken the tonsure in Kaō 1) that the report was made. The ex-emperor (Goshirakawa) was alarmed to hear of this, issuing a proclamation to assemble famed warriors and subdue Tametomo. Pleased at this, Mochimitsu rushed back to Izu where he circulated the gist of the proclamation and pressed the people of the province to prepare themselves by the latter part of the fourth month for an invasion of Ōshima. Those warriors following Mochimitsu included Itō Sukechika,¹ Hōjō Tokimasa,² Usami no Heita, Usami no Heiji, Katō Mitsukazu, Katō Kagekado,³ Sawa Rokurō, Nitta Shirō,⁴ and Amano Tōnai Tōkage, among others. He made these his main generals for a force of more than five hundred warriors. Their sails billowing and breaking the waves, they moved straight ahead.”⁵

In the meantime, the young master Tametomo was putting his armor over a court robe of brocade and a wide *hakama* of fine silk. The armor was of violet hue, with darker gradation toward the bottom and with shin guards of polished silver. He was girded with a sword with golden ornamentation, and on his back thirty-six arrows proudly showed their eagle feathers and notches. Under his arm was his bow, its shaft bound with wisteria vines and with a grip of ample proportions. He had Oniyasha bring his five-plated helmet with its golden eight-dragon design and silver star ornament. Sitting on his campstool flanked on both sides by Tameyori and Shimakimi, he had Sasarae fetch some saké and then passed around the final cup of this life.

¹ D. 1182, head of the Kudō clan.

² 1138-1215, head of the Hōjō clan and first regent of the Kamakura shogunate.

³ 1156-1221, military commander in late Heian-early Kamakura periods.

⁴ 1167-1203, better known as Nitta Tadatsune, later served as close retainer to the first two shoguns of Kamakura.

⁵ Bakin presents this as a quotation from *Hōgen monogatari*, but it only loosely paraphrases the end of the third volume of that work and adds several details.

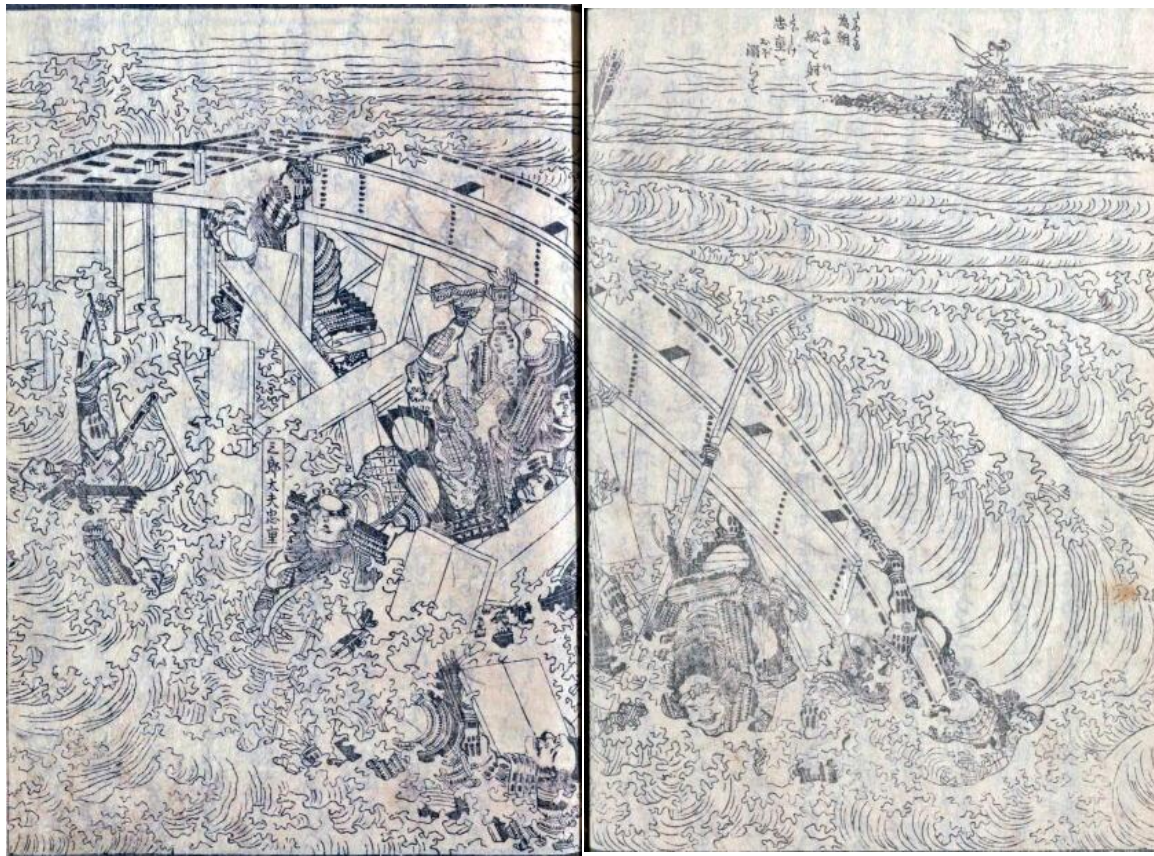
Though still young, newly initiated Tameyori showed signs of martial strength and was not timid. The time was quickly passing. Oniyasha came forth and said, “It is of no use to express regrets now, but though you are endowed with the three virtues of wisdom, benevolence, and bravery and have become the chief of these islands, perhaps you should have concealed your superior talents and waited for a more opportune moment. Though your administration of the islands is still incomplete, you have become the target of Mochimitsu’s and Tadashige’s calumny and will end up not achieving your lifelong ambitions. How regrettable it is that you should end your life in vain here in the eastern sea!” Laughing, Tametomo said, “You say such foolish things, Oniyasha. Already during the Hōgen era I was imperially sanctioned and sent into exile, but after a decade I became lord of these islands and have quite enjoyed it. Even before that, I have memories of controlling the nine provinces of Kyushu, where no one, including the Kikuchi and Harada clans, is ignorant of my martial power. In the capital, the soldiers of the Taira and Minamoto—and even retainers in the eastern provinces of Musashi and Sagami—all know of my strength with the bow. The rest of them may put on armor and equip themselves with bows and arrows, but they’re just a bunch of scarecrows coming at me, lacking all competence in arms. Their leaders are crooked-hearted Taira offscourings, with the likes of Mochimitsu and Tadashige as their guides. It won’t be the sort of battle I find satisfying. Though it will be an easy matter to shoot down despicable louts and sink their boats, what will all that taking of life amount to? My not having died by now owes only to my desire for the former order to be restored, for me to be cleared of my father’s resentment, and to restore the Cloistered Sanuki Emperor to the throne. I once heard in a sermon: ‘If you want to know what the causes were in the past, look at the results in the present. If you want to know what the causes will be for the future, look at the results in the present.’ Those who commit sins will inevitably fall into an evil course. But those who take up bow and arrow as a way of life end up killing people in pointless battles. Since my youth, I have engaged in over twenty battles and have ended the lives of countless people, but I have only killed enemies, never those who are not enemies. Neither would I hunt a deer or catch a fish only for personal pleasure. I may revere the gods and pray to buddhas, but it’s because of karma from a former life that I have ended up thus, with my name known throughout the world. I am not bound by worldly desires and passions, but I worry that because of evil deeds in this life, I might suffer in the next. I find it regrettable that those who have followed me over these ten years will lose their lives, especially because they are not from families that served my clan over

generations.” Then giving mementos to his retainers and having cordially instructed them, he sent them away. They all parted reluctantly, tears trickling down their faces.

Tametomo’s mind was at ease. He had all the armaments that had been set on display gathered up and thrown into the sea. Then he got up from his campstool and, turning to Sasarae, said, “I’m going to go down to the shore and see what the enemy looks like. Have Tameyori prepare for the end. Shimakimi is still very young, and is a girl. Since you are Tadashige’s daughter, they will not see you as an enemy, so remain alive and pray for those of us who die.” Her eyes brimming with tears, she said, “My father is despised by society and by you, so even if I am spared because I am his daughter, what honor would there be in that? My only wish is that my corpse would together with yours be exposed to the waves on the shore.” She seemed so resolute that Tametomo again admonished her, then summoned Oniyasha and gave him orders confidentially, saying, “Before I return, pile brushwood around the residence, and then slay the little ones. Then after I have cut open my stomach, immediately set the place on fire. Do you understand?” Then ordering a remaining retainer bring his bow, Tametomo headed for the shore. Sasarae of course did not lose heart, and neither did Tameyori or Shimakimi. Seeing him off, they said, “Hurry back, father. And don’t make so much light of the enemy that things end up going awry.” They had no way of knowing that this was a final parting. Soon he was out of sight.

In the meantime, Oniyasha dutifully went about piling up brushwood and cut grass, then shared with Sasarae something that just occurred to him. “The young master has already resolved to die. From what I observe, it seems that the sole cause of this attack is Mochimitsu’s personal grudge. Thus, to take one’s own life because of that might seem noble, but is actually wasteful, only a dog’s death. It would be better to escape while possible and wait for an opportune moment. With that in mind I have made ready a boat. Please, escape quickly and cross over to Hatchō Island. I’ll again try reasoning with the young master, and then catch up with you. Hurry!” Sasarae responded, “Oh, how reliable you are to have such intentions! Tameyori and Shimakimi have their whole lives ahead of them, and it is my wish that they escape along with their father. But I cannot go with them. Because of my father’s evil heart I have often been subjected to my lord’s suspicion. If I escape now, it will be said that I only feared for my own life, that I just used Oniyasha to arrange things to have even my valiant husband turn his back to the enemy. My lord would also think so. It would be too humiliating.” Tameyori also spoke up, “What mother said is praiseworthy. Though father said for us to prepare to meet our ends, how

could we shamelessly run away? I'll honorably take my own life and leave my reputation on this island." Truly, the resolve of a budding brave warrior! As the saying goes, "When surrounded by hemp, even mugwort grows straight."⁶ Oniyasha was deeply impressed to hear him say that. "Nine- or ten-year-old children growing up on urban streets would only cry helplessly in such a situation and would only be a burden to those around them. But you are indeed a young man of Minamoto lineage. But on the other hand, for Sasarae it would only be her personal reputation, and could not be called loyalty. Because if you die here along with Tameyori and, of course, the young master, then the deaths of three of you would be the result, and that would be worse than Tadashige's perfidy. It is shameful for you to be so confused about this." He remonstrated so passionately with her that she could not refute him, and said, "I was indeed wrong. Could I stand for the deaths of father and son to result from my misunderstanding? At any rate, please plan for the benefit of my lord." Just then, the retainer who had accompanied Tametomo to the shore came running back breathlessly. Kneeling before the veranda and breathing heavily, he reported, "All generals of the enemy assailants including the imperial forces under Kano no Suke



⁶ *Asa no naka naru yomogi nari*. That is, even crooked mugwort grows straight when it is in the middle of hemp plants. This implies that when one is around virtuous people, one becomes virtuous.

Mochimitsu and led by Saburō Tayu Tadashige have raised a shout and made an onslaught. Using his bow as a cane, the young master looked out over the open sea. Advancing in the first boat were over two hundred warriors, the left sleeves of their armor raised to their foreheads. They were about a quarter of a mile from shore. The captain of that boat was Saburō Tayu Tadashige, an older warrior over sixty years of age in coarsely laced armor, his pointed helmet pushed back on his head with his pure white disheveled sidelocks protruding from beneath. He was holding a polearm upright as he stood on the prow and, espying Tametomo, ordered without hesitation ‘Attack, attack!’ But they were roiled by the rough waves and could not easily reach the shore. Seeing this situation, the young master said, ‘Well now, Tadashige is at the forefront. And this is just the right distance to shoot, but it’s a shame to use my last arrow on him. I’ll sink them all, and send a chill down Mochimitsu’s spine.’ Then he took out an arrow with a turnip-shaped head, put the notch on the string and, pulling it way back, let it fly with a whiz. It struck the side of the boat about five inches above the waterline, piercing clear through the opposite side. Water rushed in through the two holes, the boat capsized, and Tadashige along with over two hundred warriors sank, to be buried in the bellies of fish. Some of the warriors who knew how to swim joined their shields together using the notches in their bows and were able to float to rearguard boats that picked them up, but that was no more than fifty or sixty of them. Seeing this situation, Mochimitsu and the imperial forces were alarmed and hurriedly turned their boats back, retreating empty-handed to a distance and not closing in. I was then dismissed, and told to flee quickly, so I came here to report. And so, I’ll leave you now.” Where he then disappeared to, no one knows.

Hearing this report, Sasarae was about to head to the shore, but stopped. “Oh, such cruel fate. Though my father got his just deserts for his evil deeds, it was my lord’s arrow that turned him into trash at the bottom of the sea! But what admirable resolution that man had to accompany my lord to the shore and then come here to report.” Wiping her tears, she pressed Oniyasha to hurry, saying, “If the assailants cannot come on land out of fear of the young master’s strength with the bow, he’ll soon return here. I’ll board a boat with him, and you board one with the children. They’re too young to run fast, so hurry!” She pulled up the hem of Tameyori’s *hakama* and hung a brocade bag containing an amulet on Shimakimi’s collar. Watching her, Oniyasha concluded that when she heard of her father’s death, she resolved to die, without regard for either Tametomo or her father. So he gathered Shimakimi up in his arms and,

taking Tameyori by the hand, ran off. Looking back at their mother, the two children cried out, “Mother, please come quickly with father!” Her heart was so full that she was unable to answer and bent over weeping.

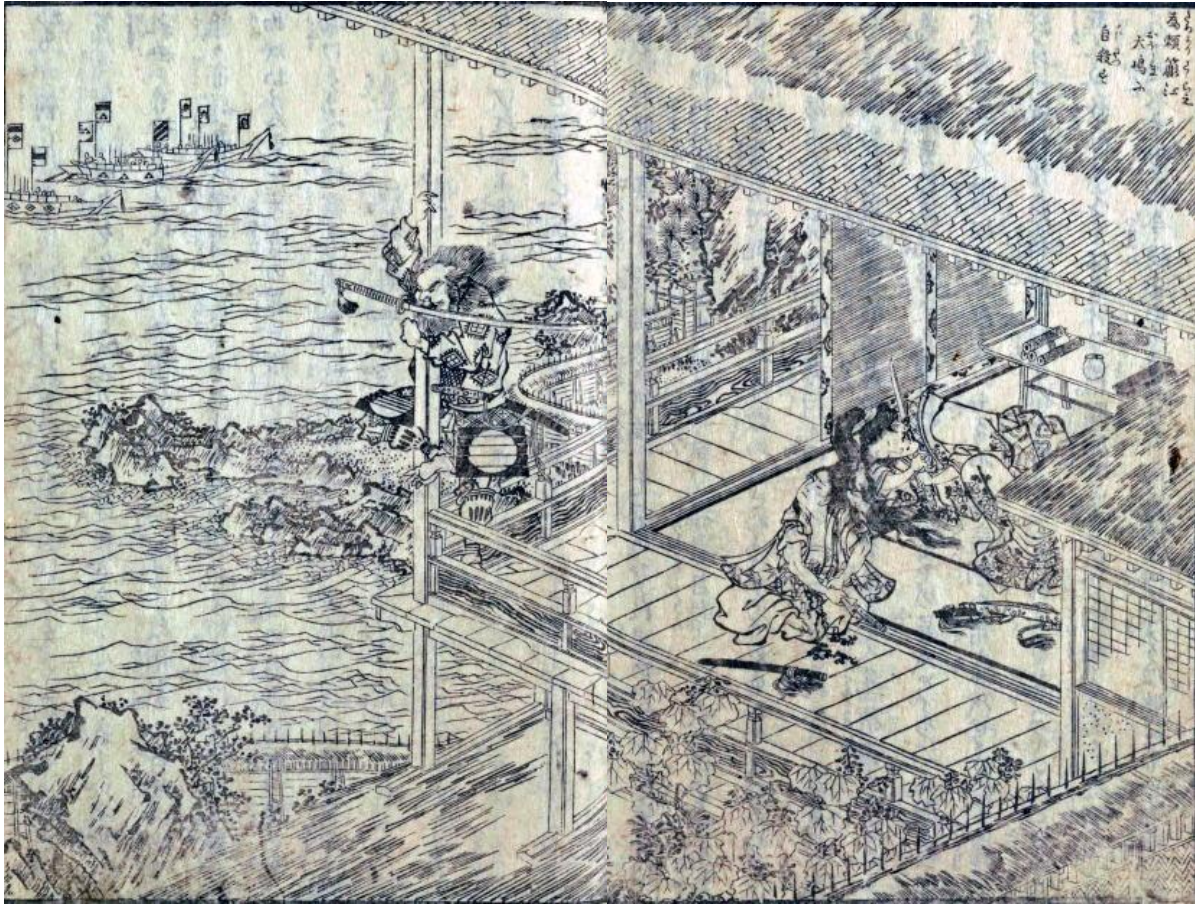
Oniyasha ran to the opposite shore not facing the enemy and hid the children in the bottom of a boat. Then he ran to Tametomo and lied, saying, “The children have boarded a boat with Sasarae. I’ve appointed two trustworthy islanders to take them to Toshima. This assault stems only from Mochimitsu’s private grudge, and it isn’t worth it to take your own life because of someone like him. Though it is presumptuous of me, allow me to take your name and I’ll set the residence on fire, then cut my belly open in the smoke. You take advantage of that distraction to slip away and go with the children to Hatchō Island.” Tametomo was greatly surprised. “You’re saying that you had Sasarae and the children escape? That was a needless scheme of your own making. Why should I, Tametomo, so value my own life that I let you die in my stead? That’s something I would never consider.” He would hear nothing of it, so Oniyasha argued from various angles, saying, “In both Chinese and Japanese history there are numerous examples of a loyal retainer giving his life in place of his lord. Ji Xin was burned in a chariot,⁷ and Maneko cut his own head off.⁸ I’ve often heard you speak of these things. I was born on an island devoid of any buddha and am a completely unlettered barbarian, but listening to your daily instructions I have been enlightened about human good and evil, and do not hesitate to repay that favor with my life. If you don’t accede to my request, then the children will end up being captured by the enemy and their shame will outlive them. Please, get into the boat.” Oniyasha strongly urged him. Everything had turned out different from Tametomo’s expectations and he was unable to do anything. He had originally intended not to retreat one inch, but he found it impossible to ignore Oniyasha’s sincere devotion in giving up his life. Moreover, he was mortified at the thought of allowing the enemy to capture the children. While he was still mulling over what course he should take, Oniyasha tugged at the sleeve of his armor, leading him to the shore to board the boat. Heaven must have smiled compassionately on the loyal retainer and aided the righteous warrior, for suddenly a mist arose over the sea obstructing vision, so the assailants in their boats

⁷ Ji Xin (d. 204 BCE) rode out of a besieged city in the chariot of his lord, Liu Bang (later Emperor Gaozu of Han [256-195 BCE]) pretending to be Liu Bang and allowing his lord to escape. When the plot was discovered, Ji Xin was burned to death.

⁸ Both the *Kojiki* and the *Nihon shoki* tell of how Maneko, the legendary ancestor of the rulers of Iki, killed himself in place of his lord, Takeshiuchi no Sukune, who had been falsely accused to the emperor.

remained unaware of this. Since Tametomo had reached adulthood in the western provinces and then spent over ten years on islands, for him navigating with a boat was as natural as walking on land. Handling both rudder and oars, he swiftly moved out onto the sea, unaware of the children hidden in the bottom of the boat. Aiming to catch up with Sasarae, he headed toward Toshima. Somewhat relieved, Oniyasha hurried back to the residence, where Sasarae was by herself burning incense and chanting sutras. Seeing that Oniyasha had returned, she gently rolled up the sutra scroll and asked, "Is the young master still on the shore? That weighs on my mind." Oniyasha replied, "When you heard that your father Tadashige had drowned, you seem to have despaired of everything and resolved to die out of loyalty and filial piety, and that's why I did not urge you to join them. Remonstrating with the young master, I managed to get him to board the same boat in which the children are hidden and had them escape to Hatchō Island. I was in such a frenzied state of mind that I forgot to tell him that the children were hidden in the bottom of the boat. But Tameyori is very clever, and will no doubt come out before they reach Toshima. I requested our lord to let me take his name, and shall set this place on fire and cut my belly open so that he can easily escape."

Upon hearing this detailed account, Sasarae was greatly pleased and said, "Now my mind is at ease. Though he was an evil man, my father was still my father. And yet, if I follow my father, I am not loyal to my lord, and if I follow my lord, I am unfilial toward my father. But whichever it may be, today is the day I shall die. You have perceived well both my resolution and my feelings about having left the children in the boat. Though I have only heard her name and have never met her, your daughter has a very good father. Whether in joy or sorrow, she'll enjoy prestige and the young master will care for her. I, too, am a concubine and served him for over ten years, bearing him three children. But because of my father's stubbornness, out of shame I shall remain here and not see them off. And so a poor ending to this life." She gave full vent to her feelings. Out of consideration for her anguish, Oniyasha said, "There's no going back now, so regrets are of no use. Well then, I'll assist you by being your second." He took out a short



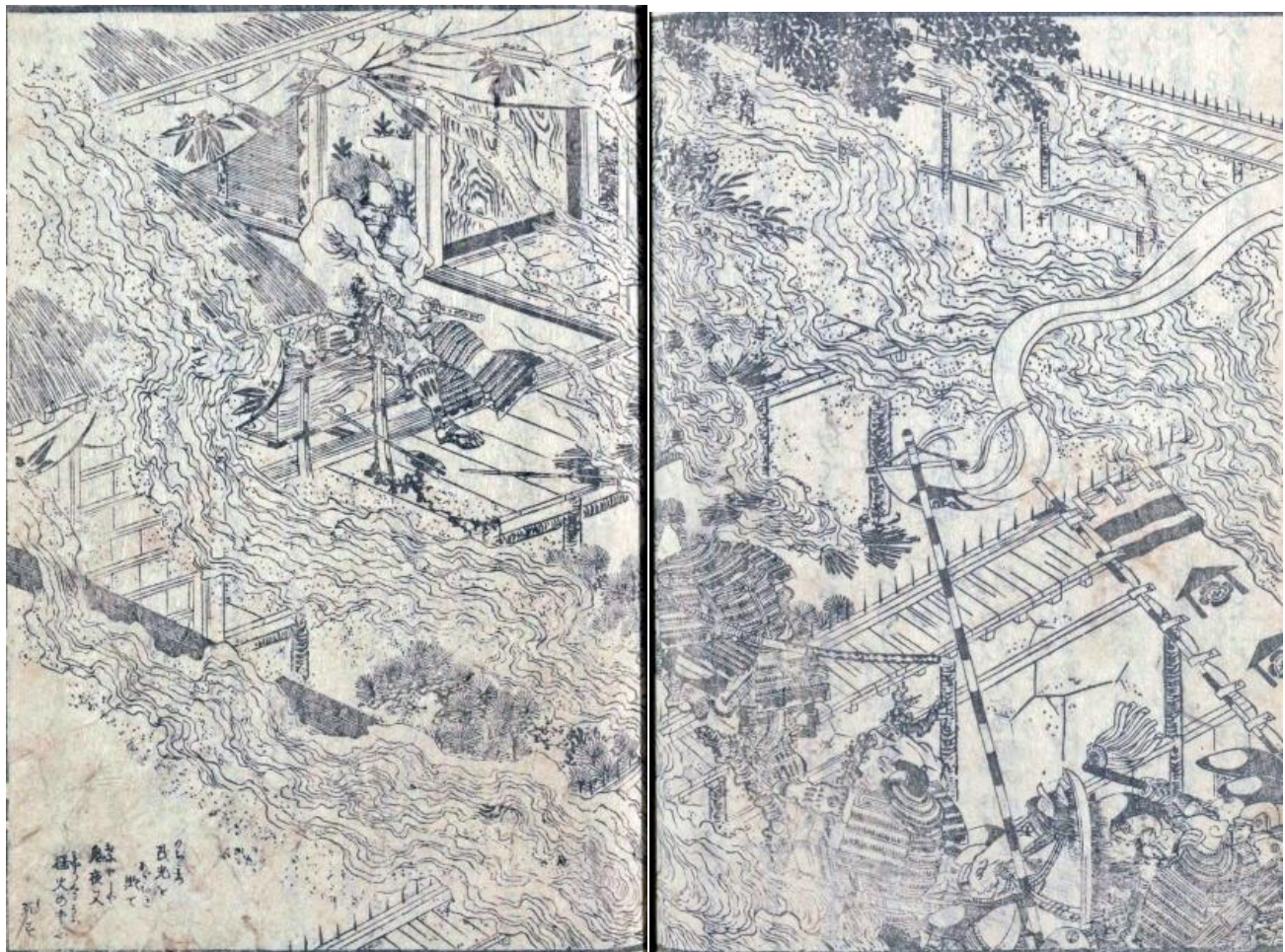
sword and stood up. Seating herself, Sasarae picked up the dagger, ready for the final moment. Just then, quite unexpectedly, Tameyori came bursting through the door. He, too, seated himself and, no sooner having opened his robe, took out his short sword and planted it in his abdomen. Greatly agitated, both Oniyasha and Sasarae could barely get out the words “What is this?” as they clung to him and tried to stop him. Pushing them aside, Tameyori explained through painful gasps, “What a feckless spectacle! I was told that mother would come later so I went ahead and got into the boat. I was worried about father, but the look on mother’s face also weighed on me even more. I thought it strange that Shimakimi’s amulet bag bulged so much and secretly opened it to find mother’s last testament, in which she wrote that she would end her life. I was alarmed. After calming Shimakimi’s fears, I left her in the boat, ran back here, and hid myself. Realizing that due to Oniyasha’s loyal devotion father had escaped safely, I was relieved. But now, unless I end my life here in the residence, the enemy will no doubt be suspicious and will go in pursuit. I thought you would be pleased that I came back from the boat. It is senseless of you to grieve.” He managed to get a word out with each labored breath. Sasarae’s grief grew with his

excruciating report, but making an effort to stanch her tears, she said, “Though I resolved to die some time ago, my mind was overcome by timidity, and now I’ll be accompanied on my journey in death by my son. Perhaps that’s because of some evil deed in a past life. One speaks of a pheasant in a burning field or a crane at night.⁹ One’s attachment to one’s child may be foolish, but when a life that has inhabited one’s womb fades away while yet a bud, how precious it then is!” Then she dissolved in tears. Oniyasha, too, wiped away tears and said with regret, “Even if this young man had not ended his life, my death in the master’s stead would allay any suspicions on the part of the enemy. This young man was much too clever and performed an act of filial piety. And that makes me your enemy, because I have failed.” Struggling with each painful breath, Tameyori said, “Don’t say such nonsense, Oniyasha. I may still be young, but I’m Tametomo’s inheriting son. Out of three children, if they don’t find the remains of even one, they would be suspicious. The fact that father told me before he first went down to the shore to prepare myself for the end shows how difficult it is to shuffle off parent-child bonds. For me there is no greater joy than to remain on this island and die while my father escapes safely. Tomowaka has gone far away to the Ashikagas and can’t be here for my last moments. If he hears about it later, will he be surprised? Will he grieve? I cannot forget his face as we played together this morning. I’ve only heard the names of Tarōmaru and Jirōmaru and have never met them, but I feel a fondness for them as my younger brothers. I dearly love my mother both as a parent and as a nurse, but she will not remain alive. And Shimakimi, who has vanished from Nojima like the evening dew that does not await the morning, who will take care of her now? I regret bearing the unfilial sin of having caused my parents so much worry over my short lifetime. Bodhisattva Ksitigarbha, please help me in the next life. Hail to Amitabha Buddha!” Intoning the *nenbutsu*, he pulled the blade around and blood poured out over his soft white skin, like red plum blossoms falling on snow in the second month. Not wanting to be far behind him, Sasarae plunged the dagger into her throat.

Just then, a battle cry arose from the open sea. Along with the sound of wind through the pines and waves beating on the shore, the din of war drums reverberated through heaven and earth. Leaning against the railing and looking out over the sea, Oniyasha saw the enemy advancing. The mist had cleared, revealing the battleships all in formation. Their armaments

⁹ These are conventional references to parental affection. A pheasant will risk its life in a burning field to save its chicks. A line from Bai Juyi’s verse in *Xin yuefu* reads: “At night the caged crane cries, thinking of its child.”

were like the Sword Mountain of hell and the setting sun over the waves looked like the prison wardens of King Yan meeting sinners with the Wheel of Fire.¹⁰ “Oh, how numerous the imperial troops! This is no time for hesitation. If they advance too quickly, the plan will come to naught. Such a pity, but there’s no help for them now. I’ll be your second so that you can end your suffering.” He then drew his sword and stood behind blood-spattered Tameyori, who closed his eyes and extended his neck. Still muttering the *nenbutsu*, he said in a thin voice, “Be quick about it.” Images of his grandsons Tarōmaru and Jirōmaru on Hatchō Island flashed across Oniyasha’s mind. Though not from his own daughter, Tameyori was nevertheless the son of his lord, and that though paralyzed his sword-bearing arm. He then went behind Sasarae. Not yet thirty years of age, she was in the full bloom of womanhood, and was endowed with such charm and wisdom as would be difficult to find even in the capital. As the thought of his only daughter, Nyoko, crossed his mind, his resolve weakened and he was lost in tears, like the dew at the roots or the drops



¹⁰ In Chinese mythology, King Yan (Enma in Japanese) is the ruler and judge of the underworld, where sinners are tormented with a wheel of fire.

from the end of the leaves, which comes before the other?¹¹ He could not decide which should be first. Then he heard Sasarae's strained voice, "Oniyasha, have you grown timid? Tameyori is in great pain! Such unmanliness is not like you." Oniyasha nodded and, the "demon" in him coming out, two heads rolled under his flashing sword. Then weeping, he put both corpses together and, reciting the *nenbutsu* ten times, rushed about setting the brushwood ablaze. In the strong wind, the flames leaped from eave to eave until the entire building was an inferno. Oniyasha untied his waistband and cut open his stomach while standing. Then he threw himself into the conflagration and was soon reduced to ashes.

The assailing forces saw the flames rising and were pitched into commotion. "It seems that Tametomo has set his house on fire and will end his life. Attack! Attack!" They shouted to each other as they brought their boats close enough to shore to unload the horses into the shallow water, then mounted them, waves lapping them until they finally climbed onto the rocky shore. But then the soldiers grew hesitant, afraid that Tametomo might have schemed to trap them. This was not just a matter of cowardice on their part; they knew very well Tametomo's reputation for valor, having heard ample reports of it. In the meantime, the burning building came crashing down. Then someone said, "Don't just stand here talking about it. Go in and get his charred head!" Seeing that those on the front line had lost interest, Katōji Kagekado entered first to find the corpse of a seven-foot man who had cut open his belly while standing. Though not recognizable he determined that it must be Tametomo and took the head. In addition there was the corpse of an eight- or nine-year-old boy, and one of a woman. Upon interrogating the islanders, Kagekado was told that the boy was Tameyori and the woman was the mother, Sasarae. Kagekado concluded that the big man must be Tametomo, and was credited that day with a meritorious deed. Tametomo's head was exposed in the Nijō Kyōgoku area of the capital, and ex-emperor Goshirakawa went in an imperial carriage to see it, as did everyone in the capital, whether of high or low estate, whether priest or laity. But since it was a charred head, everyone—from his majesty on down to the lowest—felt rather disappointed, like viewing

¹¹ This refers to a well-known verse by Sōjō Henjō (816-890, also known as Yoshimine no Munesada, one of the thirty-six poetry immortals), no. 757 in the *Shin Kokin wakashū*:

Sue no tsuyu moto no shizuku ya yo no naka no okure sakidatsu tameshi naruran

Dew on the tips of leaves, or droplets by the roots—

Whether before or after, no one knows which will vanish first.

withered moonflowers on a trellis in winter. The account in *Sankō Hōgen monogatari*¹² differs from what appears in the Kamakura or Nakarai volumes:

After that, Tametomo set his house on fire, cut his belly open and, with his back to the central pillar, propped himself with his bow into a standing position (in the Nakarai volume there is nothing about the central pillar). When the soldiers saw the house burning, They brought their ships to the shore and were about to rush in but, fearing the possibility of a staged death, hesitated to go in. When the house collapsed, Katōji Kagekado ...¹³

Thus we can know that the theory that Oniyasha set fire to the residence and fooled the enemy is not without some basis.

At the age of thirteen, Tametomo went to Kyushu and within three years brought all nine provinces under his control. At the age of eighteen he went to the capital and made a name for himself in the battles during the Hōgen era. He was exiled to Ōshima and over the course of eleven years brought many islands under his jurisdiction. His martial prestige was feared in the capital, but since he was under imperial sanction, in the end he was unable to realize his ambitions. According to the account that has been common in the world, in the latter part of fourth month of Kaō 2 at the age of twenty-eight he committed suicide. Then in the Heiji disturbance the remaining Minamoto forces were ruined and the Taira, basking in imperial favor, assumed positions of wealth and prestige. When the fake head of Tametomo was exposed in the capital, in both city and countryside there was a verse that was on everyone's lips:

Minamoto wa kuchihateniki to omoedomo chiyo no Tametomo mirubekarikeri

They think that the well of the Minamoto has utterly dried up,

but they shall yet see Tametomo lasting a thousand ages.

Upon hearing this, Komatsu no Daijin Shigemori's¹⁴ face darkened and he secretly whispered to someone, "Tametomo must still be alive. It seems that Mochimitsu was deceived by a fake head." When that person asked, "Why do you think so?" Shigemori replied, "I realized that from hearing a marketplace ditty. Haven't you heard it? Everyone thinks that 'the spring (*minamoto*) has dried up' refers to a well of water, but it really means that he's still alive. And the last phrase

¹² A Genroku period work commissioned by the powerful daimyo Tokugawa Mitsukuni (1628-1701).

¹³ Bakin's citation varies somewhat from the source.

¹⁴ Taira no Shigemori (1138-1179), Kiyomori's eldest son.

is a felicitation of Tametomo's future and his descendants prospering over countless generations. Hachirō is a legitimate heir of the Minamoto clan, and he boasts not only exceptional martial valor, but when it comes to preserving loyalty and defending justice, he is in the mold of Tian Heng¹⁵ or Guan Yu.¹⁶ If he were allowed use of bow and arrow, he would easily take control of the realm. Mochimitsu may have appealed to the throne out of personal spite to get military support, but he was no match for Tametomo, so of course he was deceived. If Tametomo does not achieve his aim, we won't see him again, but if he does achieve it, he'll be the enemy of our clan." Shigemori's prediction would prove correct many times over.

But to return to our story, after being admonished by Oniyasha, Tametomo begrudgingly boarded the boat and headed toward Toshima, but he saw no vessel that appeared to be carrying Sasarae and the children. Thinking that perhaps they went instead to Hatchō Island—and unaware of where to go—he drifted with the current and ended up on an islet close to Hatchō, Kojima (also known as Utsukishma). As he brought the boat up to the shore, day was just breaking. He said to himself, "It should be a tough voyage to get here, so it's strange that it took so little time." Just then, he heard a child crying in the bottom of the boat. Finding it suspicious, he removed the boards and saw the piteous sight of Shimakimi all alone and crying. He took her in his arms and tried to calm her, asking what had happened. When her tears finally stopped, she said, "Yesterday, mother said, 'Get in the boat with your brother. I'll come later.' So we went with Oniyasha and hid in the bottom of the boat. We waited and waited, but mother never came. Then Tameyori said, 'I'm going to return to the house and then come back here with mother and father. You stay here. Be careful not to make any noise.' Then he put two letters in my breast pocket and hurried off to Nojima. After that, the loneliness was unbearable, but I had been warned not to make a sound, so I put up with it. But when I heard your voice I was so happy that I started to cry." When she finished talking in her childlike and endearing manner, Tametomo was even more suspicious and, fumbling through her breast pocket, pulled out the letters in question. One was Sasarae's final testament in which she stated that, unable to endure any longer the conflict between loyalty to her lord and filial devotion to her father, she would end her life.

¹⁵ D. 202 BCE, king of the state of Qi. When Liu Bang (Emperor Gaozu [d. 195 BCE]) offered him amnesty, he took his life in order to preserve his dignity.

¹⁶ 160-220. Along with Liu Bei and Zhang Fei, one of the oath brothers in the *Three Kingdoms* narrative.



The other was from Tameyori. Written in a juvenile hand on Shuzenji paper,¹⁷ it was nevertheless quite mature in content: “I did board the boat as mother and Oniyasha instructed, but father’s fate seems uncertain, so I shall return to the house and end my life there. Even if I were to escape, I could hardly show my face in the world. ‘If you do not die when you are supposed to, something even worse than death awaits you, and that is shame.’ That was one of father’s daily instructions. And now I shall hasten to my end.” Reading such heroic sentiments, Tametomo’s tears spilled onto the paper. Then heaving a great sigh, he said, “Coaxed by Oniyasha I fled from Ōshima and now am mortified that I have outlived Tameyori and Sasarae. Had I known that they remained behind, how could I have left? It was because Oniyasha told me that Sasarae and the children were on their way to Toshima that I gave in to affection for children and secretly escaped. But if I had caught up with them, I should have had sufficient resolve for all of us to die in the depths of the sea. But now here I am left on this island. How shameful!” Famed warrior though he was, he

¹⁷ A type of paper produced at Shuzenji in Izu province. Its production began much later than the time of this story, and reference to it is typical of Bakin’s frequent anachronisms.

stamped his feet out of vexation. Then drawing his sword with its ice-like blade he pulled Shimakimi toward him and was about to make an end of both their lives when a fishing boat from Hatchō Island rowed toward them. Seeing the situation, the boatman shouted, “Oh, young master, wait!” Then he jumped out of his boat and into Tametomo’s, pushing him aside and taking Shimakimi into his arms. Who was that man? You’ll have to read the next chapter to find out.

Bakin notes: According to the widely circulated *Hōgen monogatari*, Tametomo took his own life on Ōshima toward the end of the fourth month of Kaō 2 at the age of thirty-three. And yet in the same volume it says that he was eighteen years old in the first year of Hōgen, and calculating from that, he would have been twenty-eight in the second year of Kaō. Truly, when one looks at the discrepancies in the various accounts, one can conclude that they are not based on historical sources. Also, in the Keishi volume, Tametomo was twenty-eight when he committed suicide, but in the Sugihara volume he was thirty-eight. None of the four volumes—Keishi, Sugihara, Kamakura, or Nakarai—states the year in which this occurred. According to the genealogy of the Minamotos,¹⁸ Tametomo was killed on Ōshima on the sixth day of the third month, Angen 1 [1175]. If he was eighteen in Hōgen 1, then in Angen 2 he would have been thirty-eight. Also, in the *Hachirō Myōjin engi*,¹⁹ it states that Tametomo took his life on Kojima on the fifteenth day of the eighth month, Jōan 3 [1173]. From Kaō w to Jōan 3 there is a difference of four years, and from Jōan 3 to Angen 2 there is a difference of four years, so there are such contradictions in the various theories. Thus, from ancient times there has been nothing conclusive about Tametomo’s suicide, or when it occurred if indeed it did. Considering these things, there is no reason to discount tales that he escaped from Ōshima and went on to great accomplishments in the southern islands. The present work is one of fiction in which I have drawn on some of these, indulging my penchant for antiquarianism and adding some superfluous details.

¹⁸ This appears in *Sankō Hōgen monogatari*.

¹⁹ An account of the origin of the Hachirō Myōjin Shrine on the island of Kojima.

Chapter Twenty-Three

A maidenflower on the shore yearns for the lonely traveler,
On a pond, the Three Honored Ones¹ appear on a three-stemmed lotus.

Thus Tametomo knew of Tameyori's Sasarae's, and Oniyasha's suicides and, filled with regrets, thought to slay Shimakimi and then cut his belly open. He steeled himself, pulled the child toward him, grasped the sword at his side and was preparing to strike when from the open sea a fisherman came rowing toward him at full tilt. He jumped into Tametomo's boat, took Shimakimi into his arms and attempted forcibly to halt the proceedings. Pushing the man aside, Tametomo was about to slash with his sword when he finally got a good look at the man. It was none other than the husband of Nyoko's cousin, Shiyō Gorō. That was most unexpected, and he could not very well carry out his plan. He asked, "How did you know I was here and came so swiftly?" Shiyō Gorō answered, "I didn't know anything. I was just following the morning current catching shrimp. At the crack of dawn I was just setting out when from the shadow of that crag over there came some unfamiliar voices—one from a woman around thirty and one from a boy around ten—repeatedly calling me by name and saying, 'The young master Hachirō has just now anchored his boat at Kojima. He is about to slay his young daughter Shimakimi and then take his own life. Go there immediately and stop him.' Those voices urging me to action rang in my ears, but I could see no one. I thought it all very strange, but hearing of 'the young master' brought back fond memories, so I sped off in my boat and came here to find that what I had heard was all true. How is it that you have so rashly come to this island and plan to kill your beloved daughter and then yourself?" Tametomo sighed and said, "Ah, the ones who called to you must be the spirits of Tameyori and Sasarae. Though on their way to the underworld, they still have such deep affection for me." With a grieved countenance he sheathed his sword and explained how he had ended up there quite unintentionally, beginning with Tadashige's escape to the provincial offices and leading to Mochimitsu's attack at the head of imperial forces, the loss of Oniyasha's and Sasarae's lives because of their devotion, Tameyori's pure-hearted death, leaving their corpses exposed in the residence at Nojima. He also read the two letters aloud. Hearing this detailed account, Shiyō Gorō was both deeply moved and saddened, his short sleeve

¹ That is, Tathāgata Amitābha (J. Amida nyorai) flanked by the bodhisattvas Mahāsthāmprāpta (J. Seishi bosatsu) and Avalokiteshvara (J. Kanzeon bosatsu).

soon as wet from tears as the clothing around his waist was from the brine. Shimakimi, who was sitting on his lap, also shed copious tears, and Tametomo was not untouched by their feelings.

Then he said to Shiyō Gorō, “Slaying an innocent child might be seen as a devilish act, but I was coaxed by Oniyasha to flee from Ōshima, and now am preceded in death by my son, have lost my closest retainer, and have been branded as an enemy to the throne. How can I go on living without disgracing myself? I have already resolved to die, so say no more. After I’ve killed myself, take my head to the Izu provincial office, collect a handsome reward, and use it to fete the islanders sumptuously.” Taken aback, Shiyō Gorō said, “How could you say such a thing? We islanders have the same feeling for you as an infant does for its mother. Not only that, but Tarōmaru and Jirōmaru are there, and if you ended your life without meeting anyone, people would lose hope, and what profit would there be in that? Besides, this island is part of Izu province, so even if you commit suicide, someone would report it to Mochimitsu. And that, too, would be of no profit. Please, abandon your wish to die, live out your life on Hatchō Island, and consider a life ahead. Both of your boys are growing up to resemble you, and Nyoko too would be greatly comforted by your presence. Not a day goes by that she does not speak of you. Please, row your boat over to Hatchō Island.” Tametomo shook his head. “Though your remonstrance sounds reasonable, as someone who escaped but who should have died I could not be so shameless as to show my face to the islanders. But at the same time I cannot simply dismiss what you say, and so I’ll put off suicide for now and remain on this islet while I consider whether to die or go on living.” Then Shiyō Gorō said, “In that case, I’ll return to Hatchō Island, share this secret with Nyoko, and then bring the boys here. Please pull your boat to shore over there.” After securing the boat on land, Tametomo and Shimakimi got out onto the rocky shore while Shiyō Gorō jumped into his small craft and hurriedly rowed off toward Hatchō Island.

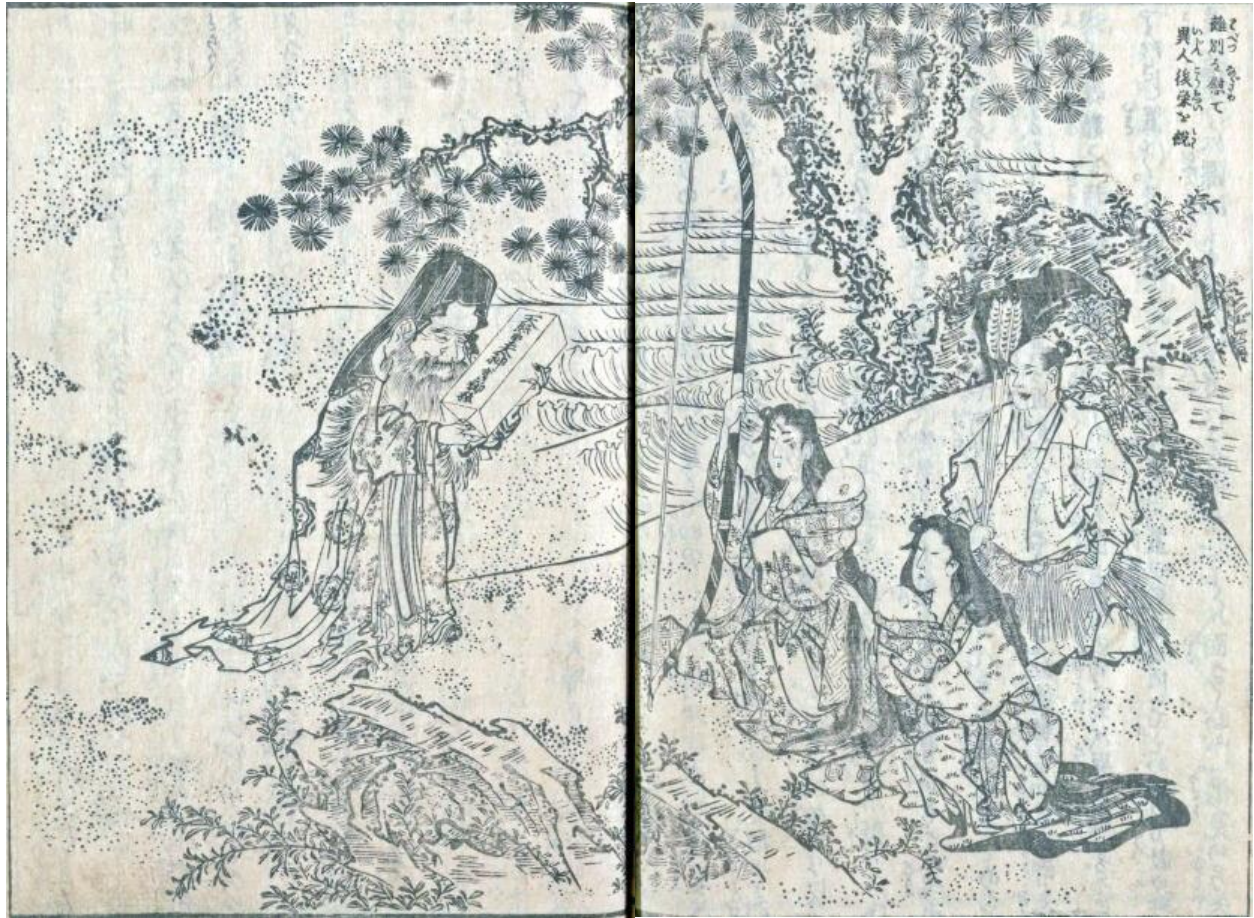
Unexpectedly stopped from suicide by Shiyō Gorō, Tametomo was in low spirits. It so happened that on the shore a maidenflower was blooming as if it understood the seasons. Looking at it, Tametomo said to himself, “In a bygone year when I returned to Ōshima, Nyoko was sad to see me go and came to this islet to see me off. To comfort her, I broke off a sprig of maidenflower and promised that if I ever returned I would have this in hand. But when I think about how I showed my back fleeing from Mochimitsu and coming again to Kojima, that maidenflower seems like a portent. I cannot leave things unfinished, and if I’m held back by feelings for Nyoko and others, I’ll never achieve my aim. I’ve already put off death. I shall trust

my life to the direction of the wind, taking me to Sanuki, where before the mausoleum of the New Cloistered Emperor I'll confirm my devotion as his last remaining loyal subject by cutting my belly open." He jumped up and prepared the boat for departure when Shimakimi, seeing what he was doing, began crying, "Father, where are you going? Take me with you!" Wetting his sleeve with her tears she clung to him and, his warrior's heart softening, he took her up in his arms. "My thinking was wrong. Even going away without seeing Nyoko and the two boys will earn her contempt. Leaving this little one behind might make things easier for me, but would impose a burden on everyone else. Hey, Shimakimi, your father will take you with him to the place where he'll die. When Nyoko and the others come, they'll either resent me or feel sorrow. But at least I'll leave a memento for them." Propping his well-used bow and some arrows in the cleft of a rock, he helped Shimakimi board the boat and rowed away from Kojima out onto the blue expanse of the sea. The god of the sea must have taken pity on them, giving them fair winds and a swift journey.

In the meantime, Nyoko and the two boys were in a boat with Shiyō Gorō at the helm. Soon arriving at Kojima, they got out of the boat and looked around on the shore, but saw no sign of the young master. But then they noticed the bow and two arrows in the cleft of a rock. Thinking it strange, they ran back to the shore but found only their own boat there.. Distraught, Nyoko said, "Well then, the young master didn't remain on this island, but has boldly gone off somewhere else. Wasn't it all just a dream? And if it's a dream, then I won't wake up so that I can see my lord's countenance." She then fell down on the sand weeping, and Shiyō Gorō and his wife were unable to console her. After some time had passed, Shiyō Gorō took the bow and arrows out and, setting them next to Nyoko, again tried to console her, saying, "The young master is a devoted warrior destined to dominate an entire generation, and so having unintentionally evaded an enemy's weapons, drifted here but felt that he could not face you, and so left these as a memento. Had I known it would turn out this way, I would have insisted that he go to Hatchō Island with me, but regrets are of no use now. And if the islanders hear about my failure to bring him back with me, I would end up being the object not only of your resentment, but of everyone's. It is especially painful to think that Tarōmaru and Jirōmaru will grow up with no memory of their father's face. And yet, if the ties that bind are broken in this life, nothing in our power can restore them. So just see this bow and these arrows as your lord, and show them to the boys to convey their father's martial valor. The wretchedness of this world is not yours alone

to bear; think of Sasarae and your own father, who took their lives on Ōshima. As parents, did they not think of their children? And yet out of a sense of loyalty and justice they chose death, which is both pitiful and regrettable. Think of them, and please don't lament this outcome.” Shiyō Gorō's wife also offered various words of consolation, then she and her husband gathered Tarōmaru and Jirōmaru in their arms and, urging Nyoko to board the boat, busied themselves with preparations for departure. But with her hand still on the maidenflower, Nyoko did not even stand up, saying between sobs, “Do not all who live grieve the death of their parents? Since what was to have been a temporary parting on this month three years ago, there was no word from him, but now as if awakening from a dream I hear that out of a feeling gratitude toward his lord my father met his end, that Sasarae died honorably preserving both her loyalty to her lord and her filial devotion to her father, and that Tameyori, too, demonstrated filial piety in his death. And there were countless others as well. But only I am left behind, unable to serve, parting from him without dying, and just lost in sorrow. We have been abandoned by both parent and lord. Like a pine on the shore gnarled by winds there is no way to stand up straight even if it lives a thousand years, for me there will never be a moment of forgetting. They say that it's usual for a warrior to be resilient in his thoughts, but for a shell cast upon the shore by the waves to then be swept away before it is found—or for an unmoored boat to be rowed away as if mercilessly calling on me to die—such mementos are of no use to me now.”² Half-crazed by the resentment so heavily bearing down on her heart, Nyoko went up on the rocky shore to the right to cast herself into the waves. Alarmed, Shiyō Gorō and his wife set the children aside and scurried to stop her. Pulling

² These lines are full of literary puns (*kakekotoba*) and conceits that defy translation.



her back, they again tried to reason with her. Tarōmaru and Jirōmaru had no idea what was going on, but seeing the change in their mother's countenance they both burst out crying. With tear-filled eyes Nyoko looked at them and said, "If there were no such thing in this world as bonds of affection, people would certainly die. And yet your father left not knowing of your mother's grief. These breasts that have been darkened by the briny wind blowing night and day, they are a lifeline for these children, and if I abandoned them now, they could not grow up. Just to think about that makes me feel wretched." Then taking a child to each side, she abandoned herself to tears.

Just then, from the top of an ancient pine on the shore, a white cloud trailed down, turning into an old man. His head was elongated, but his body was only half the height of an ordinary person. He had a boyish face but white hair, and in his hand was a large paper shrine offering. He smiled broadly and said, "A woman committed to Buddha should not find me suspicious. I have a close bond with Hachirō Tametomo and have spent these years traversing Ōshima like his shadow, protecting him. And now that he is on his way to Shikoku, I am again

following him, passing by here on my way. I could not bear to see a faithful woman grieving at parting, and could not endure seeing her lose her life over that. Though I fear upsetting a balance of karma, I shall step back from the future and tell you of good things to come. You must not end your life. There will be some trials ahead, but protect and raise these two boys. Ten years from now the Taira will perish and the Minamoto will control the realm. At that time if they go to the provinces and clearly make a case for themselves, their posterity will long enjoy peace and prosperity on these islands. Thus, the merits of a compassionate mother will be great, far exceeding what would come of your death now. To take one's life out of sorrow is what common couples might do, but it is unbecoming for a concubine of Tametomo. The foundress of the imperial line of this realm, the great goddess Amaterasu, has deep compassion for all people, and there is no place under heaven where she does not shine her light. If henceforth you welcome the god Gibo Myōjin to your island and venerate him, not only will your sericulture prosper and bring you happiness, but the islanders will all remain free from disasters. Also, in such-and-such month of such-and-such year, in a pond at the foot of such-and-such mountain on Hatchō Island, on the blossoms of a three-stemmed lotus there will suddenly appear Amitābha attended by two bodhisattvas. This will be a sign that the ways of the gods and buddhas will flourish on that island. At that time, you should have Jirōmaru become a monk so that he can offer prayers for his ancestors. But even then at that point, Tametomo's fate will not yet be exhausted; it will only be difficult to hope for another meeting in this lifetime. Thus, if you enshrine and venerate this bow and these arrows that he left as a memento, it will be the same as if he were here with you, and will long offer protection to your posterity. Make sure that you do not misunderstand this.”

Having finished his discourse, he handed the large paper shrine offering to Nyoko, and then vanished without a trace. Because of this vision, Nyoko felt as if she had awoken from a dream, and both Shiyō Gorō and his wife found it all very mysterious. For a time they all pressed their hands together reverently, bowing that direction. With the promise of a bright future her sorrow was somewhat eased and she returned to Hatchō Island, where she told everyone what had transpired. The islanders were disappointed to hear that Tametomo had not remained with them, but were awed by the vision of the old man, and held Tarōmaru and Jirōmaru in even higher esteem. They also combined their efforts and built a shrine on Kojima to house the deified bow and arrows, which they venerated as Hachirō Myōjin. They also build a shrine on the main island

to welcome the great goddess Amaterasu, venerated as Gibo Myōjin. It is said that these two shrines still stand.

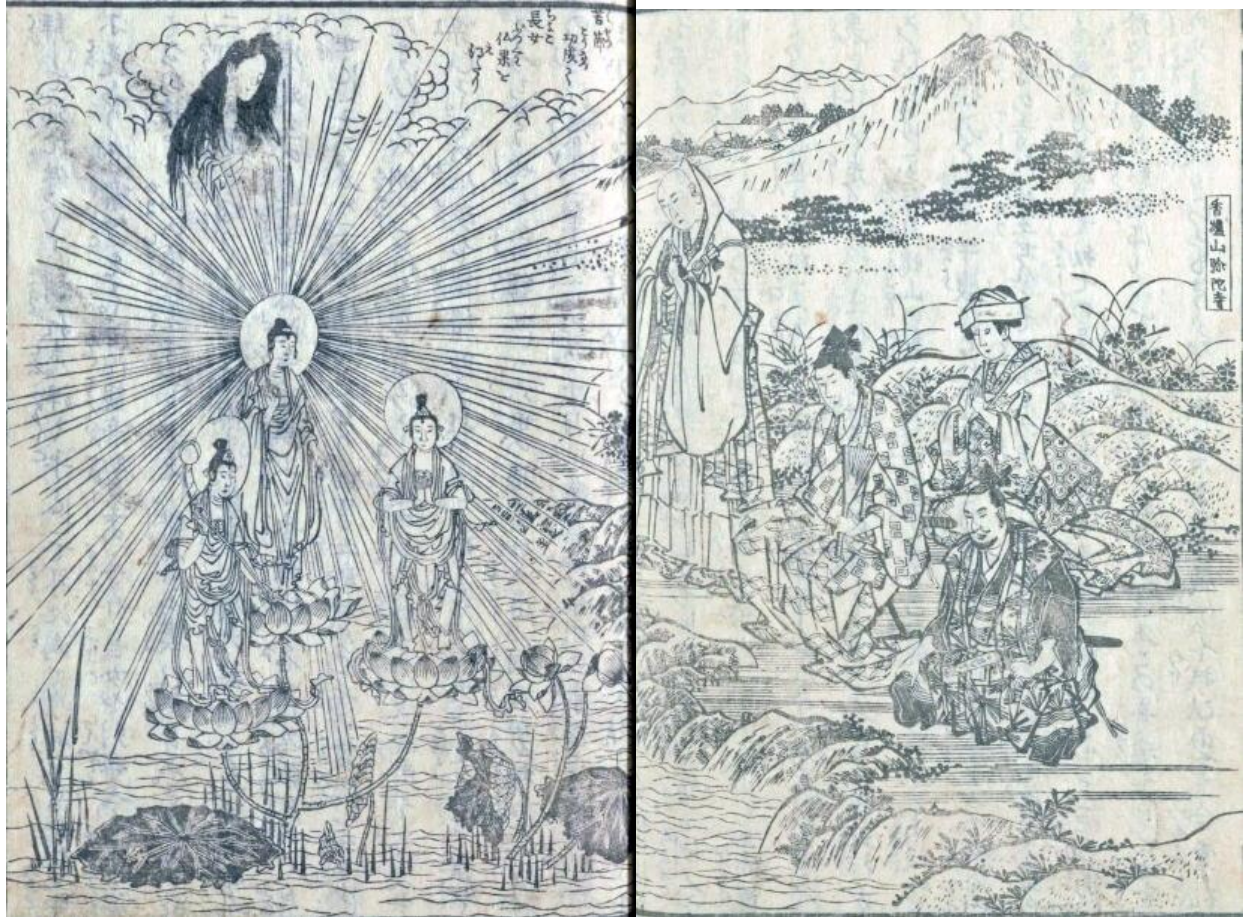
After many years had passed, in the eighth month of the third year of Jijō [1179], Tametomo's nephew, the former assistant captain of the palace guards Yoritomo,³ raised a group of righteous warriors on Hirugako Island, always victoriously advancing until in the latter part of the third month of Bunji 1 [1185] they annihilated the Taira in the western sea, unifying rule of the realm under the Minamoto. Thereupon Tarōmaru and Jirōmaru went to Kamakura where they made an appeal of Hōjō Tokimasa,⁴ making a detailed assertion that they were the sons of Tametomo by his concubine. They were soon given an audience with Yoritomo, who issued an official document granting administration of Ōshima to Tarōmaru and of Hatchō Island to Jirōmaru. Moreover, reports that Tametomo's fidelity and bravery matched that of Tian Heng reached the throne, whereupon his status as enemy of the realm was retracted. It was written personally by Gotakakura-in,⁵ and he is given the divine title of Hachirō Daimyōjin. This was cast in a bronze plate along with his likeness, and was presented for use as a part of armor. Overjoyed, Tarōmaru and Jirōmaru expressed their gratitude for the favor of the court and returned to Kojima where they enshrined it. They reported these things to Nyoko and Shiyō Gorō, and it was soon conveyed to all the islanders, who were delighted at the news. Everyone fervently revered Hachirō Myōjin as the guardian deity of the island. The faith in the efficacy of this deity grew among the successive shoguns of Kamakura, and during one reign he was posthumously give the highest court rank.

Then Nyoko, having attained her long-held wish, one day said to Tarōmaru and Jirōmaru, "I ought to have died long ago when I was abandoned by the young master, but have held onto life until now because I wished to see you succeed as was promised in a mysterious vision. Now I can leave this life without regrets. It's a pity, though, that I still have not heard of where he went after that, but the divine objects he left are enshrined here, so there is no need to look elsewhere. My pain and tribulation have finally been merited and I do not wish for a longer life, so I'll bid you farewell now. Jirōmaru, after your father's and my deaths, you are to take the tonsure, become a monk, and offer prayers for us. It is my wish that you two brothers might be

³ Minamoto no Yoritomo (1147-1199), son of Yoshitomo and founder and first shogun of the Kamakura shogunate.

⁴ 1138-1215, first regent of the Kamakura shogunate and head of the Hōjō clan.

⁵ 1139-1223, also known as Prince Morisada, second son of Emperor Takakura.



unified in purpose, circumspect in your behavior, compassionate toward the islanders, and never do anything that would sully your father's name. And Shiyō Gorō and his wife will be your guardians. Be worthy to be called loyal subjects, and leave a good name for your posterity. That is all I have to say." Then she quickly ran out. Everyone in the household was alarmed and called after her, but no one knew where she went. The next morning they found her corpse in a pond at the foot of a mountain. Greatly saddened, members of her household buried her in the side of the mountain. That same day, Jirōmaru took the tonsure. He had already made preparations to construct a temple by that mountain. What was most mysterious was that on the seventh day after Nyoko's death, suddenly a row of lotus blossoms appeared from the same stalk, and on the blossoms were manifested Amithāba and two bodhisattvas shining resplendently. Seeing such a wondrous sign, not only the two brothers and their household but all the islanders were moved to copious tears. They pressed their palms together reverently and filled the air with chanting of the *nenbutsu*. Flowers rained from the sky and music sounded as the Three Honored Ones received

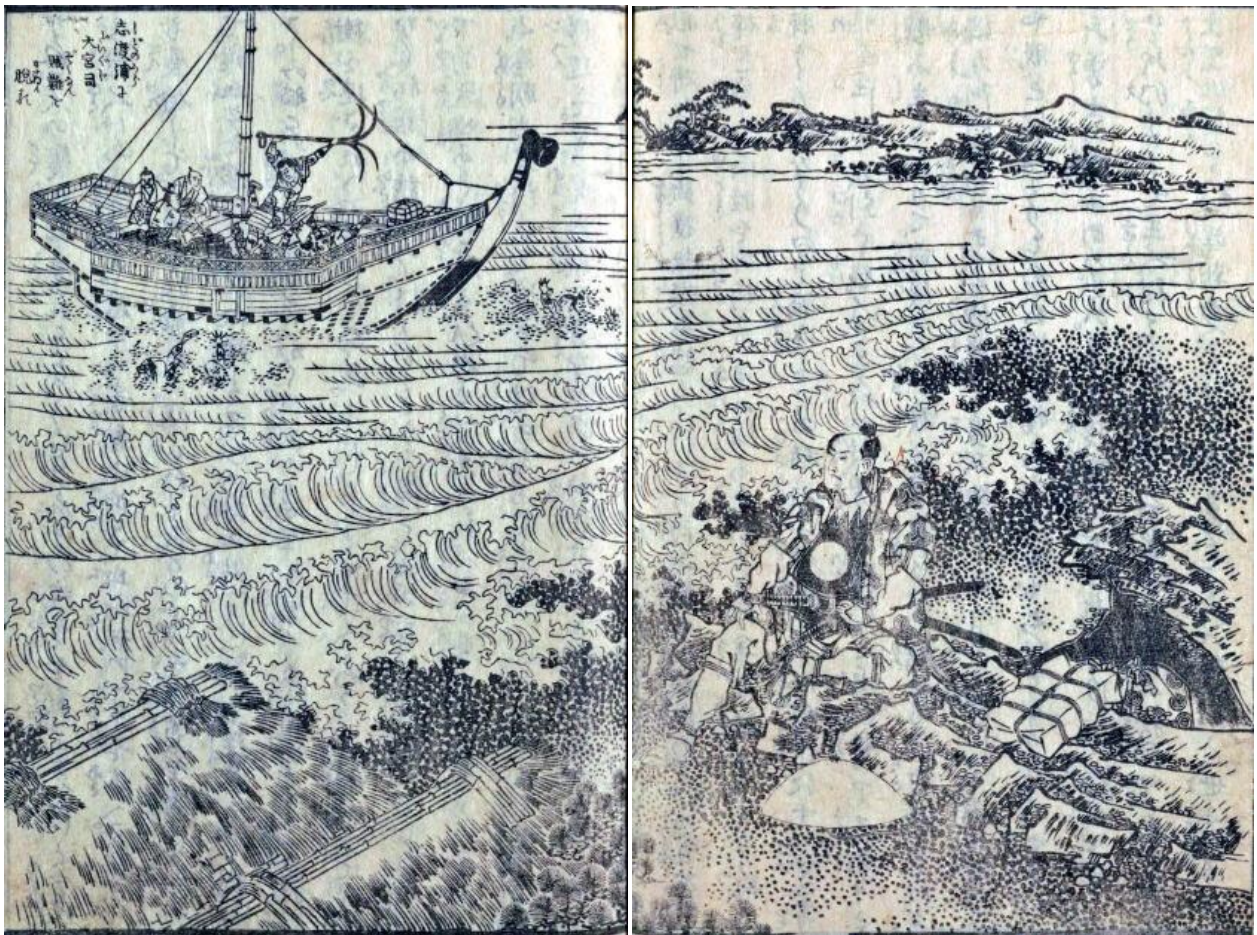
Nyoko into Paradise. Wafting away from the water they seemed to move to the top of the mountain where they were enveloped by a purple cloud and disappeared.

At that time, deeply impressed with the grace of Buddha, lay monk Jirōmaru was enlightened to the boundlessness of the divine teachings and, calling the temple he built Amidadera and the mountain Mount Incense, he became the second chief priest there, considering Tametomo to be the first. Shiyō Gorō was made magistrate, in charge of rewards and punishments on the island. The islanders all held them in esteem, referring to the lay monk as “prince” (*miya*) and Shiyō Gorō as “lord steward” (*tayū*), all praising their benevolent government. Thus the prince and the lord steward long administered affairs on Hatchō Island. At the time of Jirōmaru’s sixth generation descendant, lay monk Unka, the young heir passed away and so in the eleventh month of Kōsei 2 [1456] a priest was brought from Sōfukuji in the Kanagawa area of Musashino province, and thus the name of the temple on Hatchō Island was changed to Sōfukuji. Tarōmaru administered Ōshima, and was name Ōshima no Tarō Tameie, later changing his name to Tamemasa, and is called the founding father of Ōshima. He did not forget the debt of gratitude to the descendants of those who lost their lives in the Hōgen disturbance, inviting them to Ōshima where they entered into his service. His household flourished and he left many descendants. These are all much later happenings, but I have included them in passing. No further mention will be made of these two brothers.

Chapter Twenty-Four

At the Bay of Auhi, Uzumaru creates a disturbance at night,
Shimakimi secretly heads for Owari.

Now Hachirō Tametomo, against his desire still alive, did not remain on either Kojima or Hatchō Island. Had he half-heartedly ended his life there, Nyoko and the boys would have gathered around his corpse and wept bitterly. Leaving them in doubt might result in an impediment for him in the next life; nevertheless, having outlived wife and child, even if he were to die today it would be like retreating fifty paces because a hundred would be shameful.¹ Thus, he would secretly go to the New Cloistered Emperor's mausoleum in Sanuki province and take care of things there. Entrusting to fair winds the journey over the vast expanse of blue waters, he spent his time scooping out bilgewater, managing the helm, and cuddling Shimakimi



¹ This is a reference to a passage in the “Liang Hui Wang” chapter of *Mencius*, in which a soldier who has retreated fifty paces from the enemy shames those who retreated a hundred paces, the implication being that there is no difference between the two..

in the breast of his robe. After some nights of being awakened by the cries of plovers or resting on uninhabited islands where he drew water and found wood for fire, he endured innumerable hardships and finally arrived at the bay of Auhi in the Tado region of Sanuki province.

As a fugitive, he could not disembark without a good deal of caution. It so happened that a boat had just dropped anchor and its crew of a dozen or so men were making merry with saké and admiring the scenery on the bay before setting out for home the next day. Mooring his boat some distance from them, as the night deepened Tametomo prepared his mind for going to Shiramine, settling down without making a sound. As the evening tide came in and the moon cast its light over the sea, the islands of Shiwaku, the seven island of Izu, Naoshima, the Female and Male Islands, all appeared in a wonderful scene, like plum blossoms scattered on ice. But unlike an ordinary person Tametomo had spent many years accustomed to rough seashores, so the sight held no charm for him. The night wore on and the men in the other boat appeared to be quite drunk. They were making no sound and not a voice could be heard, so Tametomo quietly pulled his boat close to theirs. He roused Shimakimi and had her fill lunch boxes with rice in preparation for their journey to Shiramine.

At that moment, the pirate Kumode no Uzumaru—who had been terrorizing and robbing people on the waters around Shikoku—advanced with a band of henchmen in swift boats. They boarded the boat with the drunken crew, brandishing their swords and shouting, “If you value your lives, hand over your money and goods. Any objection and you’ll end up as fish food at the bottom of the sea. Get up!” Startled awake, the crew members realized the situation and scrambled to get up, grabbing the swords by their beds. Standing in front of the door to the cabin, they fought to keep the invaders out, but as they were not yet sober, their sword strikes were torpid and confused. The pirates attacked with ever greater force, like tigers on a flock of sheep, wounding five or six of the crew. Only one of them, a man of about fifty who appeared to be the captain—neither aristocrat nor warrior—soon cut down two of the pirates, dumping them into the sea, and then faced off with Uzumaru. They fought for some time without win or loss. Those who might have been counted on to come to the captain’s aid had been wounded, and they were outnumbered.

At that time, Tametomo was about to disembark and had pulled his boat up alongside the other. He looked on for a moment, but could no longer bear the sight and sprang into the boat, shouting “Take heart, men. I’ve come to your aid.” No sooner had he said those words than he

took up an oaken oar eighteen feet long, brandishing it as if it were ever so light, striking at random and downing the foe on all sides. Some had their heads smashed, some had their shinbones broken, half ended up in the sea and half were left lying on the side of the deck, but not one escaped. Seeing Tametomo's ferocity, Uzumaru was at a loss. Frightened, he tried to flee with sword in hand. But Tametomo was determined not to let him escape and pursued him, cornering him in the stern and with a shout sent him tumbling into the sea, where he disappeared beneath the waves. The crew all praised Tametomo, saying that he had surely snatched them from the jaws of death, and without his aid they would have perished. They urged him to take the chief seat, but he declined, saying, "Due to certain circumstances I am a fugitive and cannot very well accept special treatment. Please just attend to the wounded." The captain then ordered his men to dress the wounds and administer medicine, personally seeing to each one. Since they were inebriated they had shed copious amounts of blood, though the wounds were not deep. He was relieved to see that and, turning to Tametomo, said, "This fortunate outcome all owes to you. How could we not thank you? Please do us the favor of stepping inside." Then making a light he opened the cabin door and insistently invited Tametomo inside. Finally able to see his guest clearly, he asked in amazement, "Aren't you the young master Hachirō who was said to have been killed on Ōshima at the end of the fourth month?" At first suspicious, when Tametomo was able to see his host's face in the lamplight he was surprised and said, "And you are Tō no Suenori, chief priest at the Atsuta Shrine and father-in-law to my brother Yoshitomo! How did you end up here, so far away?" The chief priest replied, "As you know, Owari province has been under Minamoto jurisdiction for generations. At the beginning of the Hōen era [1135-1141] I was appointed as priest at the Atsuta Shrine by the grace of the Sanuki Cloistered Emperor, but it was entirely at the recommendation of the former police lieutenant (Tameyoshi). I wanted to visit his majesty's grave at Shiramine to pay my respects and express my gratitude for his favor, but shrine duties left me unable to do so. Years passed but in the fall I was given leave and determined to come here. Yesterday I visited the grave and realized my long-held wish. I planned to head back tomorrow when we were attacked by pirates, but thanks to you we are alive and well. It is quite fitting that this unexpected reunion should take place in the Bay of Auhi.² The crew members here can be trusted to maintain confidence, so you may identify yourself without hesitation. Nothing will be divulged. Please don't spare any details, and tell us what happened to

² "Auhi" implies "day of meeting."

you.” First expressing relief that they were all safe, Tametomo then continued, “Along with my father, at the behest of his majesty I engaged in the battles of Hōgen, planning to win every one, but our early success did not hold out and we were finally defeated. His majesty was exiled to these lonely shores, my father and brothers were killed, and I spent ten years on islands in the eastern sea until Kadō Mochimitsu slandered me to the throne and raised a punitive expedition against me. I was allow no appeal. With my family all dead, I determined to end my life also, but my concubine, Sasarae, and one of my retainers, Oniyasha, conspired out of loyalty to have me leave against my intention while they, along with my eldest son Tameyori, committed suicide. When I learned about that later I was mortified to think that I had outlived them, and have just managed to cross these countless leagues of ocean to come here to Sanuki and cut my belly open before the grave of the New Cloistered Emperor.” He also mentioned that Shimakimi had accompanied him, and told him about Nyoko, Tarōmaru and Jirōmaru. With each revelation the chief priest heaved a sigh. He sent some retainers to fetch Shimakimi, then offered food and drink to father and daughter. He said to Tametomo, “The position of chief priest at the Atsuta Shrine has for generations been inherited by Owari clan members, and my father, Fujiwara no Suekane,³ married the daughter of Owari no Sadamoto. During the reign of the New Cloistered Emperor (Sutoku) I was appointed chief priest and have continued in the position to the present. Though the former Chief of Stables (Yoshitomo) was my father-in-law, he perished in the Heiji disturbance, and so I thought that none of Tameyoshi’s sons were any longer in this world, but I’m happy to know that you have remained. Though I am a late descendant of the great Fujiwara no Kamatari,⁴ I have close connections to the Minamotos. If you would permit, I should like to adopt Shimakimi and eventually present her to my inheriting grandson, Inuwakamaru, thus preserving your posterity in Owari. And you should abandon you plan for suicide, and come with me to Atsuta.” Tametomo’s countenance darkened. “It is the will of a brave warrior not to forget that he could lose his head and die.⁵ Could I so value my life that I should be a burden to you? It is also said that ‘being a parent entails only kind affection,’⁶ and yet my daughter would have

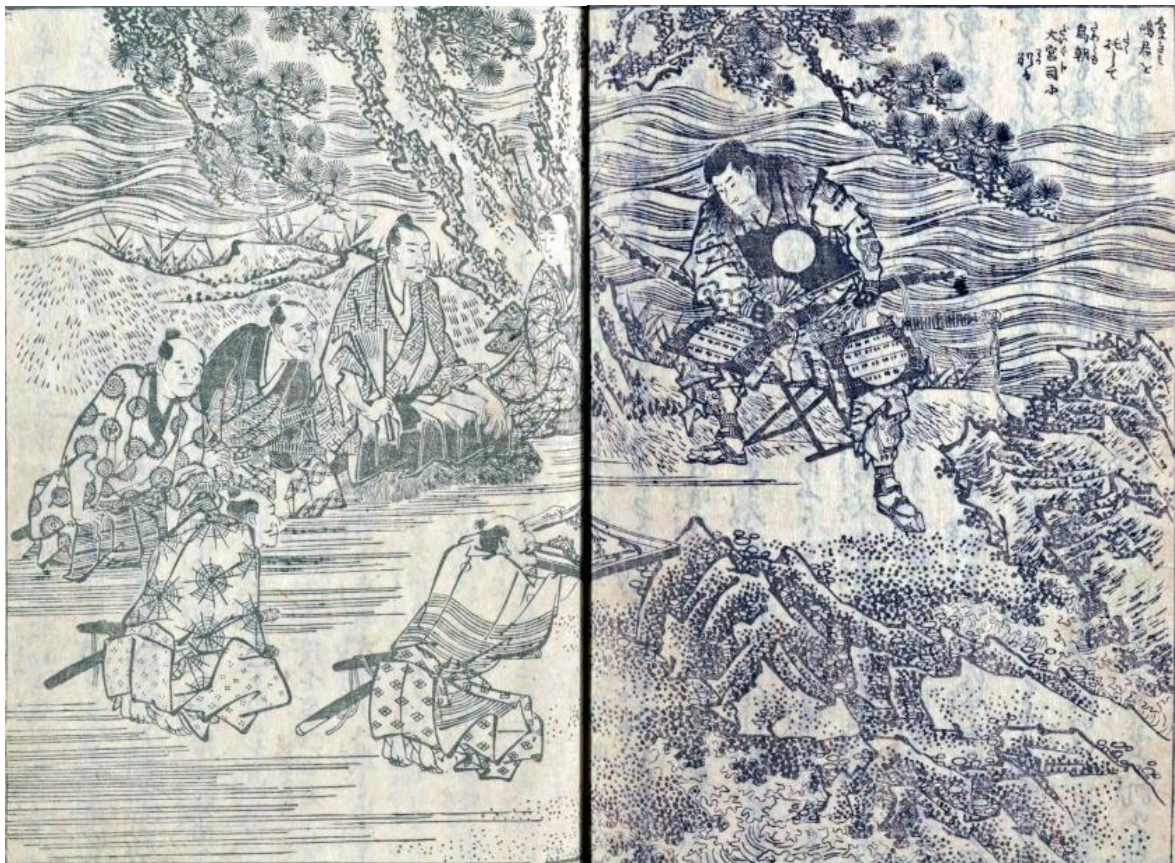
³ D. 1164.

⁴ 614-669, the founder of the Fujiwara clan.

⁵ This refers to a passage in the “Teng Wen Gong II” chapter of *Mencius*: 志士不忘在溝壑，勇士不忘喪其元 “The determined officer never forgets that his end may be in a ditch or in a stream; the brave officer never forgets that he may lose his head.” (James Legge, tr.)

⁶ A phrase from chapter three of *The Great Learning (Da xue)*: 為人子，止於孝；為人父，止於慈.

had to die with me. So please, take her and raise her, but it's useless for you to try to have me go with you. I shall carry out my intention here and now to make it clear to you." With that he grasped the hilt of his sword. The chief priest hurriedly stopped him, saying, "I was wrong! It was wrong of me to offer to take you to Owari. We won't discuss that further. From now on, Shimakimi will be my daughter. Inuwakamaru is the inheriting child. Of that you may be assured." So pledging, he exchanged cups of adoption with Shimakimi, then Inuwakamaru's stead exchanged cups with Tametomo. He ordered a retainer to pack clothing for Tametomo, including a court cap and formal kimono, saying, "These were given to me by the former Police Lieutenant (Tameyoshi) for my investiture as chief priest. I've treasured them and have only worn them on festive occasions, which why I brought them here for my visit to the grave. Please accept them as a gift from Inuwakamaru." Tametomo humbly accepted Suenori's heartfelt gift, saying, "I left the island in the middle of a battle, and was not in a state of mind to make such preparations. It pained me to think of visiting the grave in battle gear. There could not be a more welcome gift. Truly, in this court cap and kimono, I shall feel as if I am meeting my late father." His mind was filled with memories. Then after some time he said, "Shimakimi, your father is



going far away to Shiramine, where he'll end his life and vanish like a cloud. Henceforth, honor Master Suenori as your father, and after you've reached adulthood you'll become Inuwakamaru's wife, so live chastely. This is the last time you'll see me in this life." Her only response was tears of sorrow. Perceiving the depth of their feelings, Suenori and the other offered words to put their minds at ease. Then a bell rang in a distant temple and the fading of stars announced the approach of dawn. "Well then, it's time I should take my leave." With that, Tametomo busied himself packing the clothing into a cloth wrapper and, dressed as a country squire, bade farewell to the chief priest and his retainers who, still standing in the boat, saw him off wistfully as he went ashore. Ignoring Shimakimi's cry, he hurried off.

And so, at the crack of dawn the chief priest weighed anchor and after several days returned to Atsuta in Owari. He made his retainers swear to secrecy about Tametomo. Thinking of the day of their parting as the day of Tametomo's death, he ordered Buddhist services and secretly mourned his passing. He showed great kindness in raising Shimakimi, and years later when she turned sixteen, in the first month of the year in which Inuwakamaru turned eighteen, they were married. Then to insure Tametomo's posterity, Inuwakamaru took the name Minamoto no Yoshizane.⁷ When Yoshizane reached maturity, he was appointed Assistant Police Lieutenant at the Upper West Gate. He and Shimakimi were a close couple, and had two children. The inheriting son, Yoshinobu, was also appointed Assistant Police Lieutenant at the Upper West Gate, while the second son, Yoshinao, was appointed guard at the Left Gate. These brothers had many descendants, but will not be recorded here. According to one theory, south of the provincial offices in Owari lies Tado Village, where there is a place called the Burial Mound of Tametomo. In Kuramori there is a small shrine for Tametomo, now referred to as Hachiman.⁸ I think that the police lieutenant Yoshizane build this grave in Tado for his father Tametomo. In the genealogy, Yoshizane appears as Tametomo's true son. Nothing more will be said in this story about Shimakimi.

⁷ The genealogy that follows appears only in the volume of essays *Shiojiri* by the Owari domain retainer and *kokugakusha*, Amano Sadakage (1663-1733), and is nowhere else attested.

⁸ In an area of Nagoya known as Kuragari no mori there is a shrine named Hachimansha.

Chapter Twenty-Five

A young man recognizes his ability and gives him a tally,
Resolving to die, Hachirō visits the grave.

That same morning after parting with the chief priest Suenori and the others, Tametomo had not traveled two or three leagues before the sky brightened. Since he wanted to avoid meeting people, he chose byways, passing through Matsuyama into the area between Tado and Aya. He overheard people talking on the way, “Is it true what they say that last night at the Bay of Auhi a gang of pirates was defeated by a traveler? He must have been an unusually bold person.” He smiled knowing that they were talking about him, and for the rest of the way he heard only more of the same. He was amazed at how quickly the news had spread, but he just quickened his pace and arrived at Shiramine just as the autumn sun was sinking.

Then he crossed paths with a traveler twenty-two or -three years of age who looked back intently at him and called for him to stop. “Pardon my abruptness, but with your height and thick arms you look like Tajikara no Mikoto.¹ Are you the one who slaughtered the gang of pirates last night at the Bay of Auhi?” Thinking that it would not do to make a half-hearted attempt to conceal it, Tametomo answered, “Just as you say, I’m that very person.” Pleased that he had guessed correctly, the young man praised him fulsomely, then said, “If you have a desire to be a success in life, then take this tally² to Mount Kihara in the Mashiki region of Higo province. My master has a special fondness for brave warriors and would greatly value your service. Mount Kihara lies twelve or thirteen leagues southwest of Aso. It is surrounded by fields and is a lone standing mountain, so you can’t miss it.” Explaining everything diligently, he pulled a tally out of his breast pocket and handed it to Tametomo who, though dismissing it scornfully in his mind, was nevertheless impressed with the young man’s capacity to recognize ability, and accepted the tally, saying, “As you see, I have fallen on bad times and am now wandering here and there, but have yet to meet a wise lord I could serve. If I go to that area, I shall seek him out.” Greatly pleased to hear that, the young man politely vowed that they would surely meet again, and then they parted.

¹ Also known as Ame-no-tajikarao, this deity of great physical strength appears in both the *Kojiki* and the *Nihon shoki* as the god who pulled Amaterasu out of her cave.

² *Warifu*, a piece of wood or paper with an inscription that is split in half and given to each party as proof of a transaction.

As that day was coming to a close and multitudes of stars were appearing, woodcutters were hastening home through dense forests under moonlight. Cries of insects swelled as if in complaint as dew thickened on the tips of leaves. With no more signs of human activity anywhere about, Tametomo stopped beneath an ancient tree where he changed his clothing and then proceeded to the grave. It was overgrown with weeds, the lamps were not lit, and only autumn fireflies illumined the night in the fifth watch.³ The path was choked with briars. A sovereign who had lived in a grand palace attended by numerous officials in purple robes and who had demonstrated the Ten Virtues could not escape the bad karma from a former life. His wandering spirit must groan somewhere, whether in this moss-covered burial mound or among the wind-swept willows. Truly, fame and fortune in the human world are but pleasures experienced in a dream. Wife and child, precious jewels, kingdoms—none of these accompany one beyond the grave. And yet, it is not easy to leave the burning house of the Three Worlds⁴ and then abide in Paradise. Considering all this and realizing his nothingness, tears unconsciously welled up in Tametomo's eyes. In the moonlight, he could see two verses from Saigyō's⁵ collection written on the pillar:

Making a pilgrimage to Sanuki, in a place called the Port of Matsuyama I visited the place where his majesty remained, but finding no trace of him [I wrote],

Matsuyama no nami ni nagarete koshi fune no yagate munashiku narinikeru kana

A boat that came drifting in the waves of Matsuyama—

finally all that remains of it is emptiness.

In a place called Shiramine there is a hallowed grave

Yoshiya kimi mukashi no tama no toko tote mo kakaran nochi wa nani ni ka wa sen

Your majesty, in days gone by seated on the jeweled dais—

after your passing, what can be said to remain of that?

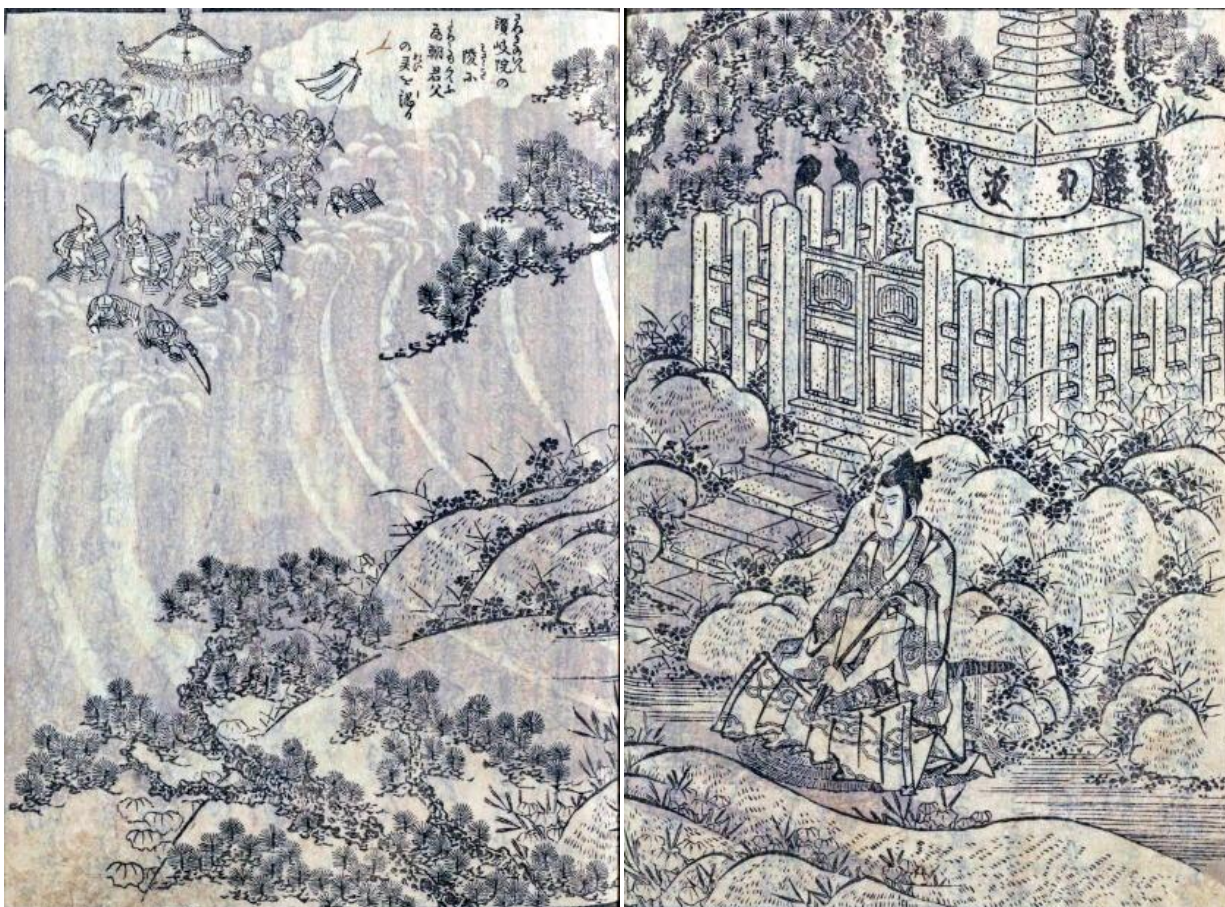
There was also an inscription: The tenth month of the third year of Nin'an [1168], En'i.⁶ That means that Saigyō had been there in the winter of the year before last. Tametomo nodded in

³ The period between four and six a.m.

⁴ The Three Worlds (*triloka*) in Buddhism include the realm of desire (*kāma-loka*), the realm of form (*rūpa-loka*), and the realm of formlessness (*ārūpa-loka*). In a parable in the *Lotus Sutra*, these three realms are illustrated by a burning house which one must escape in order to attain nirvana.

⁵ Poet-priest (1118-1190), his collection is *Sankashū*.

⁶ En'i was Saigyō's priestly name.



understanding, then opening the dilapidated gate through the stone fence, he stooped down and said, “Your majesty was a divine ruler steadily exemplifying the Ten Virtues, shining like the moon through the brocade curtains of the palace, but now are a lonely spirit longing for your home, your august body mingling with the vulgar here by this southern sea. As I brush away the dew and seek what remains of you, it is as if the autumn grasses are shedding tears, and as I face the storm and proceed to your grave, the sadness of gnarled old cypresses adds to my grief. No Buddhist rites are seen here, only morning clouds and evening moon. No sermons are heard, only the sighing of winds in the pines and the chirping of birds. The dawn wind is chilling, bringing an end to all dreams, and the shallow eaves offer no shelter from the night’s drizzle. Compared to your past glory, it is heart-wrenching to see what has become of you, but it does no good now for your humble subject to speak of his loyalty, my strength spent, and being quite alone and with all allies gone. In this life I shall swear my loyalty, and in the next I shall share in your joy and pain. My only wish is to destroy those who mistreated you. Though unplanned, I have ventured here from Ōshima and have disturbed your noble spirit.” Having spoken these words he shed many

tears, then took out his short sword and was about to thrust it into his belly. But strangely enough, his feet and arms were suddenly paralyzed and would not move.

Just then, from the direction of Chigo Peak a bank of clouds arose covering half of the moon. It became dark and lightening flashed ceaselessly, its brightness penetrating the grave while a fearsome wind swept down from the mountains. Among the leaves carried by the wind were forty of fifty mounted warriors in the lead, followed by a palanquin carried by creatures with elephantine noses, hawk-like beaks, and wings on both sides of their bodies. As Tametomo looked on in utter amazement, the palanquin was set down next to the burial mound. Thereupon, the warriors arranged themselves in two rows. Following an announcement of his majesty's presence, his august voice recited a verse from within the palanquin:

Asakura o tada itazura ni kaesu ni mo tsuru suru ama no ne koso nakarare

I did not bring back the palace of Asakura for it to end in vain—

now moved to tears by the sounds of fishermen.⁷

Then his majesty stepped out of the palanquin and seated himself on the cushion that had been set out. His countenance was the same as when he was in this world, but he appeared haggard. Taking note of that, Tametomo turned his gaze to his majesty's retinue. On his left were the Minister of the Left Lord Yorinaga,⁸ the Police Lieutenant of Shimotsuke Masahiro,⁹ his son Guard of the Right Gate Tayu Yorihiro,¹⁰ and others totaling twenty-six men. On the right were the Rokujō Police Lieutenant Tameyoshi, his sons Lieutenant Guard of the Left Gate Yorikata, Head of Housekeeping Yorinaka, Kamo no Rokurō Tamemune, Gen Shichirō Tamenari, Gen Kurō Tamenaka—father and sons six men—as well as Hei Umanosuke Tadamasa¹¹ and his eldest son Keeper of the Treasury Nagamori, his second son chief of Palace Warriors Tadatsuna, his third son Assistant to the Minister of the Left Masatsuna, and his fourth son Heikurō Michimasa. These were joined by Murakami Assistant Police Lieutenant Motokuni and twenty-four warriors who would have been a match for a thousand. All were in armor over court robes of white brocade, carrying bows of unfinished wood and arrows with white feathers. Their visages were fierce and their breath produced flames illuminating the grass and leaves. Bowing

⁷ The meaning of this cryptic verse is clarified in the following pages.

⁸ Fujiwara no Yorinaga (1120-1156).

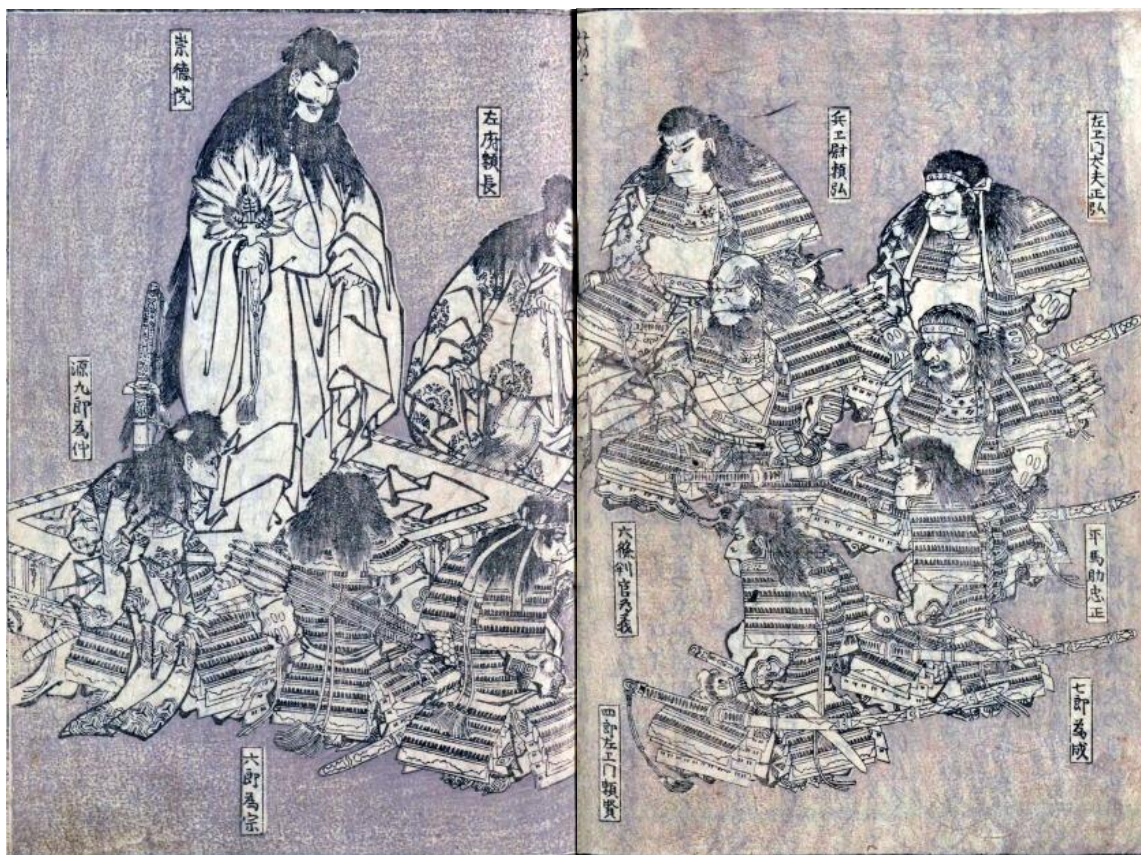
⁹ Taira no Masahiro.

¹⁰ It was Taira no Iehiro (d. 1156) who was Masahiro's son and who sided with Sutoku in the Hōgen disturbance. Yorihiro was Masahiro's grandson.

¹¹ Taira no Tadamasa (d. 1156).

deeply from a distance, Tametomo studied the face of his father Tameyoshi, which was the same as before, but the hair on his temples was as white as frost and the locks protruding from under his helmet was like silver needles. The furrows on his brow were more numerous than the waves lapping the nearby bay, but he struck a most gallant pose as a warrior in his long silk court robe and armor tied with white cords and carrying his famous sword, Unomaru, a gift from his majesty. Affection between parent and child is known to everyone, whether of high or low station, whether clever or dull, and Tametomo wanted to shout “I’m here, father!” but could not very well do so in his majesty’s presence. His father paid him no mind, and did not even look in his direction.

Then surveying the crowd on both sides, the Minister of the Left Yorinaga said, “The enemy of the realm, Yoshitomo, was executed while your majesty was still in mortality. How should the despicable Ise Taira be eliminated? We have come up with a strategy, and would like to present it in detail.” Tameyoshi and Tadamasa together replied, “Kiyomori is an incompetent fool, but because of karma from a past life has managed to secure the highest rank and stipend possible for a commoner, and with his entire clan basking in imperial favor, has turned to cruelty.



Heaven has long despised his arrogance, and yet because of Shigemori's¹² reputation for virtue, loyalty, and filial piety, that clan has been shielded from outside scorn. It is because of him that the Taira have been spared destruction. But they will not last beyond another ten years. You should wait a little longer. An opportune time will surely come." Hearing this, his majesty said, "Is Kiyomori the only one I despise? Even if Shigemori were not in the world, I would still vent my long-standing anger at Masahito (Goshirakawa). From the beginning, Kiyomori had forgotten the proper relationship between sovereign and subject, and if he enrages Masahito, installing him in the Toba Detached Palace and forcing forty or fifty officers below the Grand Minister Fujiwara no Moronaga¹³ to resign and has the office of Regent shifted to the Provisional Governor-General of Dazaifu,¹⁴ thereby gaining popularity, he should be able to do unprecedented things. Then with Tameyoshi in the vanguard and Tadamasa in the rearguard, they could enter the Hōjūji Palace (Goshirakawa's Palace) through the West Gate. And Kiyomori and his followers could be lured out to the bay in Sanuki and made to sink to the bottom of the sea." Tameyoshi again spoke, "The gates of the Hōjūji Palace are all invincibly fortified by Fudō Myōō and Daiitoku Meiō,¹⁵ and can hardly be breached. What would your majesty have us do?" "Then, it's only a matter of time until Kiyomori moves to his residence in West Hachijō." Everyone responded, "Yes, of course. In another ten years we shall inform your majesty." Then a smile appeared on the New Cloistered Emperor's face. "With this, then, the elimination of the vile enemy is settled. But the rewarding of the posterity of loyal retainers has not yet been accomplished. I have not forgotten even one of the many who sacrificed their lives for me, but especially Tameyoshi who—apart from his eldest, Yoshitomo—led the charge with many of his sons. How could I ever forget that? So heartrending! All in their youth, and they lost their heads during Hōgen, leaving only Hachirō Tametomo still alive. I would like to put all of Japan under his jurisdiction, but am unable to do so. Yoshitomo's son Yoritomo has long spread his military success far and wide, and Heaven has permitted it, so my divine powers cannot counter that. Now Tametomo's second son, Tomowakamaru, is being raised secretly by Ashikaga Yoshiyasu, and is now in Shimotsuke. He will have descendants, and the war lords of the realm will look up to them. And posterity yet to be born to Tametomo will become rulers of a kingdom. And none of

¹² Taira no Shigemori (1138-1179), eldest son of Kiyomori, served as Regent.

¹³ 1138-1192.

¹⁴ The Regent (*kanpaku*) at the time was Fujiwara no Motofusa (1144-1230).

¹⁵ Guardian deities.

this will be the result of my favoritism; it will be the natural reward for the virtuous loyalty of Tametomo, his wife, and his retainers. This blessing will extend to his posterity as well. Yoritomo will for a time enjoy martial success and destroy the Taira, but the karma of reward and punishment will not end with that. Since his father, Yoshitomo, was guilty of patricide, that bad karma impinges on his posterity, and will lead to discord between Yoritomo and his brothers. He will put his able younger brother¹⁶ to death. His glory will last a mere forty years, from his father to his son. And all will meet untimely ends, a sign of which will be that all shall die during years of era change. Good karma invariably flows from good actions, while evil inevitably engenders bad karma. The lesson of the wheel of *samsara* is not without its basis. How could gods show partiality toward mortals? But Tametomo has bitter contempt for the world, counts his own life as dross, and is about to kill himself. This is mistaken. If in the winter of this year he heads to the province of Higo, he'll meet former acquaintances there. He'll tell them of the tribulations he has endured, and they will console him. However, his fate will remain uncertain. There will be reunions, but also partings, and many will suffer unfortunate deaths. Though these will occur because of loyalty, when he realizes that they are retribution for the many enemies he has killed, he will harbor no regrets. There is a saying that 'He who has tasted the bitterness of distress will surely come out above others.' When facing the inevitable, it is the Japanese spirit to regard death lightly, but it seems that this often comes from shallow deliberation and is mistaken. Is that not so?" With an air of deep gratitude, Tameyoshi said, "Among the many children of your majesty's humble servant, Tametomo excelled over his brothers in both wisdom and bravery. I especially regretted his loss, but realizing that his posterity will enjoy such good fortune, my joy could not be greater. This all owes to your majesty's great favor." Everyone in attendance also expressed felicitations, and with Masahiro and Yorihiro serving, a cup was offered to his majesty, who graciously accepted it. Then saké was poured for everyone, and when cups were finally passed to those under Yorinaga, everyone had tasted of it. Then, from the bodies of the New Cloistered Emperor and all of his retinue, flames erupted, turning in an instant into a single glow which then in a golden flash ascended to Chigo Peak.

¹⁶ Minamoto no Yoshitsune (1159-1189).

Realizing that what he had seen was a dream, Tametomo wondered if it was all the suffering of the realm of *tengu*.¹⁷ His drawn short sword still in his hand, he was leaning against the stone fence but unconsciously sat down. Somewhat awake by then, he sighed and looked up to see the first geese of the season fly past honking. The moon was concealed behind clouds and a light drizzle began to fall. So then, it was all a dream? Both the sovereign and his father appeared in the dream in spirit, spoke of things to come, and stopped him from committing suicide. Thus, he ought not to end his life in an offhand manner. And the verse that his majesty recited from within the palanquin, as Tametomo pondered its meaning, it occurred to him that there was an “Asakura” in Chikuzen province: the Kami-tsu Asakura district. Empress Saimei¹⁸ had passed away there. And the New Cloistered Emperor passed away on these desolate shores, so his majesty thought of the roughhewn wooden palace of Asakura and meant that it was not his will to have Tametomo come back here to end his life in vain. His majesty had honored him by putting all of these sentiments into thirty-one syllables. Tametomo wiped tears of gratitude from his eyes. After spending the night by the grave, at dawn he recited:

Asakura ya ko no marutono ni iru kai wa kimi ni shirarete kaeru ureshisa

At Asakura, the gain of entering that roughhewn palace

now revealed by his majesty—how joyous the return!

With that verse as an offering, he left Matsuyama and, after hiding in the mountains until the middle of winter, did as the vision had instructed, heading for Higo province.

Upon further consideration, Tametomo’s verse resembles one by the musician, the Governor of Awaji Korenari, lay monk Rennyo (or, according to one theory, Rennyo was the priestly name of the Chamberlain of Ogawa, Takanori, but this is not certain), but the latter half is somewhat different. Thus, Rennyo’s verse probably occurred to Tametomo as he recited his. True to what Tametomo had seen that night, thereafter various unusual things began to happen in the capital. These were the result of the Sanuki Cloistered Emperor’s curses. On the twenty-ninth day of the sixth month of the first year of Jishō [1177] a posthumous name was given to him: Ex-emperor Sutoku. That was meant to placate him, but his resentment only grew. Then on the first day of the eighth month of Jishō 3 [1179], the Komatsu Minister Shigemori passed away, and

¹⁷ *Tengu*, literally “heavenly dogs,” appear in both Shinto and Buddhist lore, as well as in folklore, and are represented variously ranging from destructive to protective.

¹⁸ 594-661, had two reigns: first as the 35th *tennō*, Kōkyoku, 642-643; second as the 37th *tennō*, Saimei, 655-661.

Kiyomori's ruthlessness became even more unbridled, finally leading to madness and all kinds of foolish and outlandish actions. These also came from the spirit of Ex-Emperor Sutoku. After the destruction of the Taira clan, in order to appease him even further they constructed a shrine on the ruins of the Ōinomikado Palace that was destroyed in a battle, and posthumously elevated the Minister of the Left Yoritomo to the highest court rank as Dajō Daijin. This took place on the fifteenth day of the fourth month of Genryaku 1 [1184]. And it was said of old that it was because of the curse that many of the Taira clan perished in the waters off Sanuki. And it was on the second day of the first month of Heiji 1 [1159] that Lord Yoshitomo, Keeper of the Left Stables, was killed by Osada. On the thirteenth day of the first month of Shōji 1 [1199] Lord Yoritomo passed away following an illness after having fallen from a horse the year before (Kenkyū 9 [1198]). (The *Azuma kagami* does not record Yoritomo's death because of the inauspicious nature of it.) In the first month of Jōkyū 1 [1219], the Minister of the Right Lord Sanetomo¹⁹ was killed by the Zen priest Kugyō.²⁰ Thus, three generations of father and sons all died in the first month of a year, and all were in a year when the era name changed, which is extraordinary. Yoshitomo was slain in the bath at Osada's home in Noma Utsumi. And forty-four years after the beginning of these events, on the eighteenth day of the seventh month, Genkyū 1 [1204], Yoshitomo's grandson, Assistant to the Imperial Guards, Yoriie of the second rank, was slain in the bath at Shuzenji in Izu province. This also happened in the year of an era name change, and thus both grandfather and grandson shared the same fate. This shows what the Sage said, that even those who create funerary wooden images would not likely have posterity.²¹ How much more, then, that the bad karma of Yoshitomo, being guilty of patricide, should bring about such things. Considering that, it becomes clear that children should above all be unswerving in their loyalty and filial piety. What is really terrifying is a disaster of one's own creation.

¹⁹ Minamoto no Sanetomo (1192-1219), Yoritomo's son and third shogun of Kamakura.

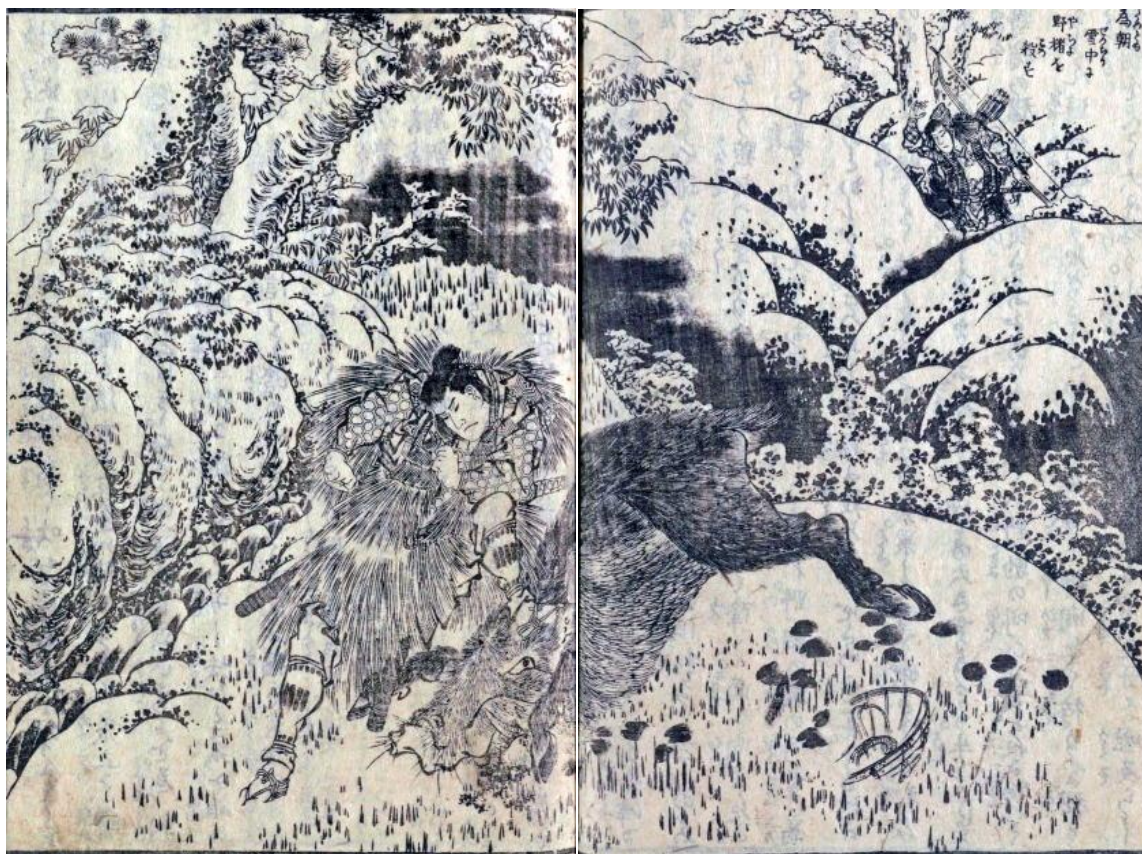
²⁰ 1200-1219, second son of Minamoto no Yoriie.

²¹ This refers to a passage in the "Liang Hui Wang I" chapter of *Mencius*: 仲尼曰：『始作俑者，其無後乎！』 "Zhong Ni [Confucius] said, 'Was he not without posterity who first made wooden images to bury with the dead?'" The wooden images (C. *yong*; J. *yō*) were likenesses of survivors buried with the dead in place of sacrificing themselves.

Chapter Twenty-Six

The impoverished warrior kills a wild boar in the snow,
The hunter provides country liquor on a dark night.

In the latter part of the eleventh month of Kaō 2 [1170], Hachirō Tametomo secretly left Matsuyama in Sanuki and headed for Higo province. Since he had previously abandoned his boat at Auhi Bay, he secured passage at Shido Bay and arrived at Udo Beach in Higo the following month. There he climbed the tall peak of Mount Udo, which commanded a wide view of the Inlet of Tsukushi, and in the middle of it he saw a strange fire. It was strange because it was burning in the open waters, and it made him think of his departed wife, Shiranui,¹ renewing his grief. Previously he had exercised control of all of Kyushu, bringing even the Kikuchi and Harada clans into submission and doing as he pleased with his coming and goings. He was always attended by an impressive entourage, enjoying the finer things in life and lacking nothing in wealth and fame, but now he could only dream of a decent meal. Only the sea and mountains



¹ *Shiranu hi*, “unfamiliar flame,” is close to Shiranui.

remained the same. He wondered what was in store for him. All he had brought with him was a walking-stick and a sedge hat. Even the breeze from the bay and the fluttering of the water fowl weighed on him. In accordance with the vision of his majesty and his father he had come to this province, but he had no particular place to go or to lodge. Since it was at the Aso Shrine that he had happened to meet Tadakuni, he decided to go there this time also and leave his fate in the hands of the god. Crossing the Midori River at the border between Udo and Takuma, he passed the village of Todoroki and the territory of Hagi, arriving in the district of Mashiki. Night had fallen and the sky was overcast. Snow was falling and the cold was unbearable. But it was a desolate area with only waving, withered stalks of pampas among the low bamboo grass, and no house that might offer lodging. Before him towered Mount Kihara. He recalled what the young man on the road had told him, but saw nothing that might be the abode of a warrior. The path was soon hidden in snow, but he could hear something. Thinking that it might be a thief, he began running, but the snowfall had increased in intensity and he could not see his way ahead in the growing darkness. Just then he heard the loud whinny of a wild horse, obviously startled by something. Suspicious of what might have caused the commotion, he was staring into the darkness when suddenly something came madly dashing toward him, kicking up the snow. As it drew closer he could tell that it was a wild boar, as large as a cow and with arrows stuck in its back. So that was what had frightened the horse. Wondering aloud to himself what this creature might try to do, he stood firmly and waited. Seeing Tametomo, the boar grunted loudly, flashed its sharp tusks, stood its needle-like bristles on end, and charged at full tilt toward him. Tametomo nimbly dodged the attacking beast. Even more enraged, the boar turned itself around and again charged. This time, raising a foot, Tametomo kicked it in the side. The beast was somewhat weakened by the blow, and Tametomo was able to kick it against a boulder on the right. As he continued to kick, the boar was severely weakened and finally, with a cry of pain, expired.

Then from the foot of Mount Kihara, carrying a bow of unfinished wood and a quiver of arrows, a hunter came running breathlessly, espying Tametomo by the glow of the fresh snow. Seeing that the boar had been defeated, he was both amazed and pleased. He approached and said, "For many years I've made my living hunting wild beasts in these mountains, but I wasn't able to down this boar even with two arrows. I wouldn't have been able to withstand its attack, so I let it run past and followed its trail of blood. Then I found that you had easily defeated it, just as in ancient times Emperor Ōhatsuse Wakatake (Yūryaku) was hunting on Mount Katsuragi

and killed a raging boar.² I'm only sorry that Princess Hatasa³ was not able to see this." He was full of lavish praise. It was dark and his features were not clearly visible, but judging from his voice he was young. Then Tametomo said to the hunter, "There is a saying, 'When an animal is desperate, it bites; when a man is desperate, he robs.' I had no intention to kill the boar. It came charging at me, and then collapsed. If I were to be rewarded for that or take pride in it, that would amount to stealing someone else's merit. It wasn't my strength, but rather your sharp arrows that brought it down." But the hunter only praised him all the more. "It was because of your unexpected help this evening that I was able to get such great quarry. The snow is getting deep. Please come and stay at my home." Tametomo replied, "No, I'm in a hurry to get to Aso. I appreciate your kind offer, but I cannot stay." But the hunter insisted. "It's at least another twelve or thirteen leagues to Aso, and without a horse or a guide, wouldn't you lose your way in the snow? Please, stay at my home. It's not far from here." While Tametomo was gratified by the offer, he showed no sign of accepting it, so the hunter took out a gourd flask and said, "If you insist on going your way, at least drink this saké. It will help you endure the cold. It's my lifeline as I go about these mountains, but I'll share half of it with you to reward you for killing the boar. Just as wildflowers are all the more beautiful, so is country liquor the best. Allow me to offer you some." He brushed the snow from a flat rock beneath a tree and invited Tametomo to sit down next to him. Then he took an old metal cup from out of his straw coat, filled it with saké, took one sip, and then offered the cup to Tametomo, who was unable to refuse. Since he was famished, he downed the cup then thanked the hunter, tied on his sedge hat, and ran off in a southeast direction.

As he passed by a steep mountainside, the intoxication set in and he began to feel dizzy, stumbling about unsteadily. He thought it strange, and muttered to himself that only one cup of saké should not make him so drunk. As he continued his attempt to run, his feet became tangled in hooks and ropes buried in the snow and he fell down. Generally, once a drunk man falls down he is not able to get up. As he was lying there in a stupor, a woman in deer hide clothing came out of a nearby hut and, inspecting him closely, bound his with a rope which she then tied to the main pillar of the hut. Tametomo was so inebriated that he was hardly aware of what was going on. Somewhat later the same hunter came with the boar tied to a pole, dragging the heavy

² This account of Emperor Yūryaku (418-479; r. 456-479) killing the raging boar appears in chapter 131 of the *Kojiki*.

³ Better known as Kusaka no Hatabi no hime, consort to Emperor Yūryaku.



burden. The woman came out with a pine resin lamp and said, “My husband, tonight we’ve made an excellent catch. I’ve taken the traveler alive. See what a tenacious look he has on his face! It must have been due to your saké that he came here so drunk.” Nodding in response, the hunter dragged the boar inside, then looking at Tametomo as he lay on the ground, turned to his wife and said, I failed to bring down this boar, but this man happened to come along and easily killed it. He looks like someone who could be of use to us. Thanks to that saké, we gained both a boar and a man with no special effort. Come on, let’s take him to the mountain fortress and report.” The woman dutifully put on her straw coat and sedge hat, then one in front of the other they hoisted Tametomo onto their shoulders and climbed the path deep into the mountain.

The fortress was a building with a steep roof surrounded by a fence of wattled bamboo. Unlike something one would expect in a remote mountain area, it did not look like a dwelling of brigands, but rather like a place to which warriors might withdraw while awaiting an opportune moment. Passing through two of its gates, the hunter and his wife carried Tametomo to a courtyard in front of the guest room and set him down there. Then the hunter went inside and

shortly came back out to tell his wife, “Her excellency the nun is awake and said that she would personally come out and take a look at him. Has he sobered up at all?” His wife answered, “Since we carried him all this way through the snow, he should be getting sober about now, but if her excellency the nun will be coming out, we’d better give him an antidotal medicine.” Nodding in agreement, her husband took a packet of powdered medicine from his breast pocket, mixed it with water, and poured it into Tametomo’s mouth. Appearing to be thirsty, he gulped it all down.

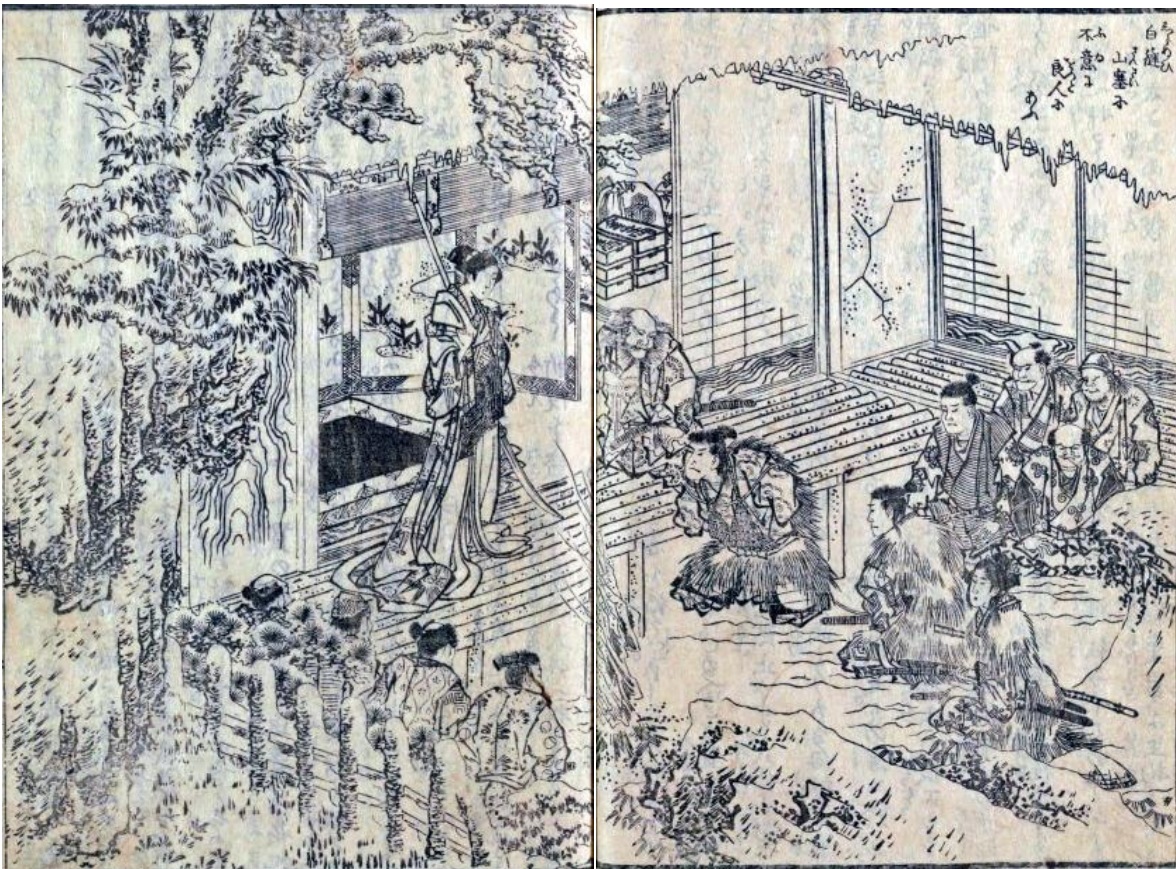
Then three or four other young men in the same attire carrying candles assembled themselves on either side of the veranda to await the appearance of the nun. A beautiful woman of about thirty with long hair tied in the back appeared. She was wearing a three-layered white garment of twilled silk overlayed with a brocade surplice. In her left hand was a pole sword with a white handle while her right hand fingered a rosary with crystal beads. A man of about fifty with armor around his waist and carrying a long sword followed her from behind a screen. Seating herself on a campstool, she asked, “Is this the man you took alive?” Her voice was not loud, but was as clear as a bell. Shocked into sobriety, Tametomo looked about, wondering how he came to be tied up, and where this place was. But he resigned himself to whatever the case might be, thinking that he could easily break the bonds that held him. He decided to wait and see what these people’s intentions were. So he remained compliant with his head lowered and did not say a word. Then addressing Tametomo, the nun said, “Traveler, do not be alarmed. We have absolutely no intention of harming you. Long ago I ordered that couple who are in my service to watch for travelers passing by this mountain who look as if they might be of service, to get them drunk and bring them here. But we obviously do not want to recruit brigands, and so we put a drug in the saké. The hunter only pretends to drink it, covering the opening of the gourd with his finger, while the traveler drinks it and falls into a stupor. Then he is brought here and administered an antidote. We’ve already recruited twenty or thirty men that way. If you accept what I say, we’ll loose your bonds and I can explain the conditions. But if you do not, then it cannot be helped, and unfortunately we would not allow you to leave here alive. Consider carefully, and give us your answer.” Her speech was bold, not at all feminine. Growing ever more suspicious, Tametomo unthinkingly raised his head and looked intently at the nun, and she for the first time saw him clearly. Full of amazement, she turned to the man accompanying her and said, “Look at this man! He resembles in every feature the young master who was said to have ended his life on Ōshima. It’s all very strange.” The man then came forward and directed

the lamplight toward Tametomo. “Indeed, he does look like the young master.” By then recognizing them, Tametomo said in a state of agitation, “Aren’t you Shiranui, who in an autumn over ten years ago died here in Kyushu? And isn’t he the Half-mile Stone-thrower? How could I ever forget you?” Then the nun and all of her retainers fell into a state of commotion. “So you *are* the young master! I had assumed that you were no longer in this world. This is most unexpected! A blessing I don’t deserve!” Both jubilant and at the same time humbly respectful, both Shiranui and Kiheiji hurried down into the courtyard and untied his bonds with their own hands. Then they invited him to take the seat of honor. The hunter and his wife were amazed, and looked a bit ashamed.

Chapter Twenty-Seven

At Mount Kihara deceased wife and deceased husband meet,
The district of Mashiki gains a brave commander.

Then Tametomo said to Shiranui, “I had heard that during the Hōgen disturbance you were killed along with your father Tadakuni, but here you are alive and well. How can that be? Perhaps this isn’t really Mount Kihara in Higo province, but a mountain in the world beyond. Please, tell me what happened.” Shiranui replied, “I was supposed to have died in Dazaifu, but unable to ignore my father’s directives, I escaped from the castle together with Yatsushiro and several ladies in waiting. The assailants’ arrows were raining down, so we were not able to escape until Nokaze (the wolf) charged and scattered the enemy, opening up a route for us to get out, but he was then shot and killed. We barely managed to escape, but the women ended up being scattered in various places and Yatsushiro was hit by a stray arrow and died. I was in a very dangerous position until I met Kiheiiji who was returning from Ōmi. We fled for our lives, and the next day met with eight or nine ladies in waiting. Together we went to Shikoku where we



hid at Misaki in Sanuki province. At Kotohiki Shrine I unexpectedly encountered Butōta, and overheard him talking to himself, saying how he tricked you and was able to deliver you captive to Sado no Hyōe no Jō Shigesada. Realizing that he was my enemy I killed him and vented my hatred. Then we heard that you were to be exiled to Ōshima. I sent Kiheiji to the capital to ascertain the truth of the matter, while with Butōta's head I went with my ladies to pursue Mochimitsu with the intention of rescuing you, and hurriedly set out from Sanuki. We arrived at the inn in Sengan and ran into Kihieiji, who had gone there with the same plan in mind. Together we conducted a night raid on Mochimitsu and thought we had rescued you, but it turned out to be a decoy that Mochimitsu had planted. We interrogated the man and learned that you had already been sent to Ōshima. There was nothing we could do. Mochimitsu had already escaped with his men. I thought that at least we could return to Sanuki, rescue the New Cloistered Emperor, proceed to Ōshima, and together with you raise a resistance. But the palace at Sugu Island was so heavily guarded that one could not easily approach it. Thus, with no other means to support myself, I scooped brine at Shido and collected shells while Kiheiji went into the mountains and cut wood to make charcoal. We spent many months that way. My ladies departed one at a time, and there was no way to achieve our long-held aspirations. Toward the end of the eighth month of Chōkan 2 [1164], strangely enough I was able to approach the New Cloistered Emperor on the rocky shore of Sugu Island. I told him of your and my enduring loyalty to him and urged him to leave that place, but he was unwilling to do so. He explained, 'Your and your husband's sincere loyalty will be rewarded after my death. Five to seven years from now, you will certainly meet Tametomo. But it will be as if your conjugal ties have already been severed. Though you will be reunited you will again part and will not grow old together. Such will be your fate. But even if it is only a fleeting vow, you can wait for that moment, and when you are reunited you can share your grief and console each other.' Then while still alive he entered the realm of devils, and a phantom of his spirit went out over the sea. And even more strangely, the New Cloistered Emperor passed away the next day. For three years after that, I offered prayers for his soul and in Shido secretly arranged for Buddhist rites. But I grew weary of living there and longed for my native place. Together with Kiheiji I clandestinely returned to Higo and sought out this hiding place on Mount Kihara. Tarō Motoakira, the son of Takama no Shirō who served as second at my father's disemowelment and set the castle on fire, had become a hunter in the foothills of this mountain. We unexpectedly met and identified ourselves to each other, and he turned out to have

aspirations in no way inferior to those of his father Shirō. And the woman, Isohagi, had been in my service many years. Of the many ladies in waiting, most had become estranged from me and left, but she remained valiant and loyal. So Isohagi became Takama no Tarō's wife, and I had them live in the foothills and watch for travelers who looked stalwart, deceiving them and bringing them here where we would tell them of our secret plans. Fearing that our secrets might be leaked if the travelers did not agree to join us, then unfortunately we had to kill them. Our plan was to cross over secretly to Ōshima after gathering a sufficient number of warriors and rescue you. We had no other intention. But then we heard that toward the end of the fourth month when you were attacked by Mochimitsu's forces, you set your house on fire and killed yourself, and in our grief and vexation we thought that our long-held ambition had come to naught. Our thought that even of ten thousand leagues of rough waves separated us, as long as you were alive fate would someday bring us together again now seemed to have been only a vain hope. From then until today, rather than grieving, I have been consumed with resentment and indignation with no outlet for it, seeing Kudō Mochimitsu as my husband's enemy, and have desired to take his head and offer it to you, and then immediately end my life. I cut my hair to show that I had also cut my association with the world and took on the aspect of a nun, but my heart continues to wander in the realm of the *shura*.¹ Urged on by Isohagi I have recruited twenty or thirty brave men who are ready to take action anytime. I had made arrangements with Kiheiji and others to set out by boat tomorrow, but last night I had a dream in which a woman about thirty years of age suddenly appeared at my bedside and said, 'The one you have loved these many years will come here tomorrow evening. Abandon the plan to travel eastward.' In the dream, I asked, 'Where have you come from?' Without answering, the woman disappeared. I then awoke, and next to my pillow was an ancient style plain kimono of ochre dyed silk with fresh blood stains and a fresh skull. Thinking that this must have some special meaning I did not wait until morning to call Kiheiji and others to have them divine the meaning of it. They pondered various possibilities but could not come up with anything definite. But your advent here this evening is certainly a fulfillment of the dream. And our meeting here is also a fulfillment of what the New Cloistered Emperor said." Thus she gave a full account of ten years of grievous experiences. Kiheiji shed tears of joy in spite of himself, and both Takama no Tarō and Isohagi bowed deeply toward the veranda. Takama said, "At the time of Hōgen, I was only eight or nine years old, and

¹ Malevolent warrior demigods.

so did not recognize the young master. I am guilty of having impertinently bound you with a rope. I hope that you can be gracious enough to forgive me.” Looking intently at Takama and pulling the half of the tally out of his breast pocket, Tametomo asked, “Do you recognize this?” Greatly astonished, Takama replied, “Last autumn when I paid a visit to the grave at Shiramine in her excellency’s stead, I handed a tally to a traveler. So then, that was you? I am so ashamed. It was pitch dark, but even so it was foolish of me to have forgotten your features.” With deep regret, his forehead perspired profusely.

Tametomo responded, “When you addressed me that day last autumn at Shiramine, I had already resolved to die, but I was impressed with your sense of recognizing ability in others and tentatively accepted the tally, which created a bond between us as lord and retainer. And if you had not bound me, I would never have met Shiranui, so there is no need for you to feel shame.” He also praised Isohagi, and lauded both Shiranui and Kiheiiji for their steadfastness through many years of adversity. Then he asked to see the kimono and skull that Shiranui had found after her dream. Inspecting them closely, he said through tears, “Without a doubt, this is Sasarae’s kimono. And this must also be her bleached skull.” Takama’s wife wondered aloud, “Who is Sasarae?” Tametomo replied, “She was the daughter of the administrator of Ōshima, Saburō Tayu Tadashige, but unlike her father held high principles. She served me these ten years and became my concubine, bearing three children: Tameyori, Tomowaka, and Shimakimi.” Then he related to them in detail his experiences on Ōshima, about how he ended up on Kojima contrary to his intentions, how he first learned there of the deaths of his concubine and child, about how he almost slew Shimakimi and then cut his belly open, about the vision of Tameyori and Sasarae, about Shirō Gorō, Nyoko’s cousin, and how he was prevented from suicide at that place. Then he told of how he deceived Shirō Gorō into going back to fetch Nyoko and the two boys, then leaving Kojima without meeting them, of how he ended up going to Sanuki where he met the high priest Suenori at Auhi Bay, about how he entrusted Shimakimi to his care at Atsuta in Owari, about how he headed for the New Cloistered Emperor’s grave the next day, declaring his loyalty to the late sovereign, about how he had drawn his sword and was ready to end his life when he suddenly became paralyzed, about his vision of the New Cloistered Emperor and his own father, and about how he was told to abandon the thought of suicide and instead go to Higo that winter. He also mentioned the retainer to Ashikaga Yoshiyasu, Yanada no Tokikazu, who was stealthily sent to Ōshima and who took Tomowaka to Shimotsuke. He related everything, leaving

nothing out. Kiheiji, Takama, and Isohagi all exclaimed their admiration at each turn of the account, while Shiranui alternately wept, beamed with joy, admired Tameyori's pure filial devotion, pitied Sasarae's and Nyoko's hardships and Oniyasha's loyal self-sacrifice, or sympathized with Tomowaka's, Shimakimi's, Tarōmaru's, and Jirōmaru's sad loneliness at separation. Tametomo in turn lamented the deaths of Tadakuni, Yatsushiro, and all the others in the fall of the castle, and admired the loyalty of Nokaze in dying in the place of Shiranui and the others. He also mentioned the crane that he had gone to the Ryūkyū kingdom to retrieve and present to the ex-emperor, and how he had strangely encountered it on Ōshima. "I assumed that you were no longer in this world, and you assumed the same of me, which means that ours was a pledge that would last two lifetimes." As the two of them finished their accounts, the snow had stopped falling in the garden and the long winter night was about to end.

Then when Takama no Tarō told the brave warriors staying at the mountain fortress—all of them *rōnin* who despised the bad faction the Taira and who admired Tametomo's wisdom and valor—that the young master had miraculously survived and had come there, they were greatly pleased and followed Kiheiji and Takama no Tarō to meet him. Shiranui had bound her hair up and removed her surplice. She set out a festive mat, and like blossoms on a withered branch both master and retainers were joyous, with this one meeting forgetting ten years of trials and tribulations.

Chapter Twenty-Eight

Shiranui conceives, and Shunten is born,

The true heart offers a prayer, and Tomowaka sets out on a journey.

The next day Kiheiji and Takama no Tarō urged Tametomo, saying, “Though we only have twenty or thirty warriors with us now, your being here makes us stronger than a mounted force of a million. If someday soon under cover of night you capture the Harada castle, the warriors of all of Kyushu will recognize your ability. And those samurai who previously favored you and have turned to farming, as well as the peasantry, will rush to you unbidden. Then you could crush the Kikuchi, take Bizen and Higo, and after that attack the Ōuchi and Ōtomo clans, driving out provincial governors. Then if you established your base in Dazaifu, you’ll have complete control over all of Kyushu, and you would not need to fear any punitive imperial forces. Neither would the Taira amount to anything. You could avenge the wrongs of Hōgen on behalf of the sovereign and your father, and also satisfy your own resentments that have been pent up these many years. Please resolve to act quickly.” Tametomo replied, “As you say, taking Kyushu now would not be at all difficult. But the New Cloistered Emperor has already passed away and Prince Shigehito (Sutoku’s oldest son) has renounced the world and taken Buddhist vows, so who would benefit from such petty skirmishes, fighting over lands, slaughtering people, and disrupting the peace? The Taira have always been our enemies, but without securing passage through Yu,¹ there is no way I could strike at them. The best thing to do now is to wait for an opportune time. For the sake of my own glory I am not willing to mobilize nameless troops and kill a lot of innocent commoners.” Shiranui was present and was listening attentively to this exchange, adding, “As a woman it is not my place to say anything, but the Kikuchi and Harada clans are my father’s enemies. Kadō Mochimitsu is the enemy of Tameyori and Sasarae. If you are not inclined to take Kyushu, then you could cross over the sea to Izu, attack Mochimitsu, and raise a standard in the eastern provinces. You would find many hereditary retainers in that area who are of Minamoto lineage. If you were to subdue the eight provinces of the east, then you would be stronger than the nine provinces of the west. How could you call such battles ‘nameless’?” Tametomo responded, “When the Kikuchi and Harada attacked Tadakuni, they did

¹ During the Spring and Autumn period in China, the state of Jin wanted to attack the state of Guo, but needed to obtain passage through Yu to do so.

so at imperial command, though they also satisfied personal spite. Thus it was a civic act, officially sanctioned,² wasn't it? And when Mochimitsu, out of enmity toward me, enlisted an imperial punitive force, even though Tameyori, Sasarae, and Oniyasha ended their lives, it was not a matter of Mochimitsu waging a private war against me. Therefore I did not resist him. I simply waited for death because I revered the court. What is despicable is the ruthlessness of Kiyomori. He troubles the sovereign and tyrannizes the populace, stoking the anger of both Heaven and men. I shall wait for the opportune time and then strike. One must not be swayed by private emotions and forget the shared way of the public." Shiranui, Takama, and Half-mile Stone-thrower were struck with admiration for Tametomo's clear sense of duty and sighed, saying, "Truly, such a hero isn't appreciated in this age, and has even been branded an enemy of the throne. Why won't Heaven shine favorably on our lord?"

Shiranui also admired Sasarae's spirit of perseverance and fidelity. Wrapping her kimono and skull in a cloth, she installed them in a shrine as a memorial, offering flowers and incense both morning and evening. She considered having a renowned priest conduct rites and having them interred in sacred ground, but one night had a dream in which she was told, "I am happy that you wish to have my bones properly interred, but there is someone I am still waiting for here. Please allow me to remain here another five or seven years." Shiranui found it all very strange, and told Tametomo about it. He, too, shared her wonder, and said, "Whoever it is she is waiting for, we should just leave her remains as she wishes." And so Shiranui did not have the skull interred, and left it hidden in the shrine.

Then early one morning Tametomo said to Shiranui, "When I came to this province recently, I was on my way to visit the Aso Shrine when, passing by this mountain I was unexpectedly led by Takama and Isohagi to a reunion with you. And so early tomorrow morning I shall go on a pilgrimage to Aso and fulfill my intention." Shiranui was pleased to hear that, and said, "Aso is where the guardian deity of my birthplace dwells, but since I've been confined here on this mountain I have not made even one pilgrimage. Please, let me accompany you this time." Tametomo agreed. "Then come with me." Leaving Kiheiji and over twenty warriors on the mountain, they set out together with Takama and Isohagi. The two couples made the thirteen

² Tametomo's arguments contrast *kōdō* 公道 (the realm of official, civic, or public activity) with that which is merely personal (*watakushi* 私).

league journey in one day, spending the night at Aso Shrine, and then returning to Kihara the following night.

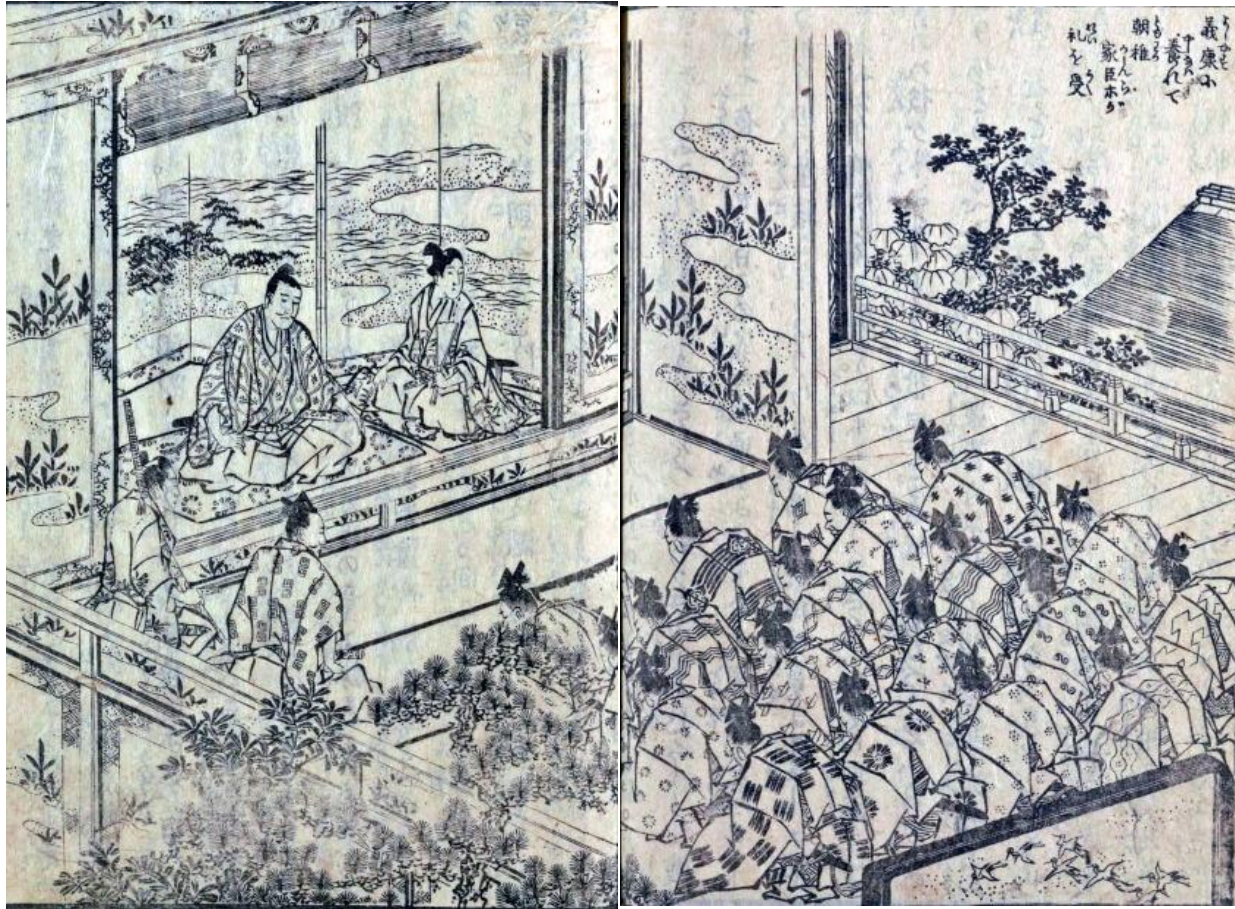
That month Shiranui conceived and in autumn of the following year gave birth to a boy. At his birth, an old crane with a red head landed on the roof, cried three times, and then flew off toward the south. This was a very felicitous sign which everyone took to promise a long and fulfilling life. Tametomo recalled what the New Cloistered Emperor had told him, but did not mention it to anyone except Shiranui and Kiheiiji. He named the boy Sutemaru, and charged Kiheiiji with his upbringing.



Now Mount Kihara had always been part of the Mashiki district, surrounded on all sides by plains overgrown with thick vegetation. To the south lay Goka no shō, with the mountains of Shirayama, Momiki, and Nasu rising like giant waves. To the west was the district of Yatsushiro, Kawata, Mount Tane, and the Kuma River. To the northwest lies the Ashikita district with Mounts Mizumata, Fukuro, and Kunimi, beyond which is the expansive blue of the sea. Thus, the likes of the Harada and Hayashi clans remained unaware that Tametomo was hiding on

Mount Kihara. Somehow, only the fishermen on Mizumata Beach knew about it. Thinking nothing of the twenty-league journey they sometimes came to Kihara with fish wrapped in reed or bamboo leaves. They were indebted to long-standing patronage and showed sincerity in all things, and Tametomo and his followers never wanted for seafood. His retainers set their swords aside and cultivated the land, cut grass, opening many new fields and adding to their provisions. From the time Tametomo came to this mountain, probably out of fear of his unfailing arrows, wild geese avoided flying over the area. Thus, later generations called in “Mount No-Geese” (Gankaisan), because geese continued to avoid it. Also, the stone foundation of Tametomo’s fortress remains to this day, and is called by the locals the “ruins of Tametomo’s castle,” and travelers to that area always make sure to visit it.

But putting that aside, when in the latter part of the fourth month of the preceding year (Kaō 2 [1170]) Yanada no Tokikazu was by the bay of Shimoda in Izu province waiting for word from Tametomo and most surprisingly Tomowaka arrived safely riding on an enormous kite, he was greatly pleased and sent the smoke signals to inform of the success of the plan. Then carrying Tomowaka on his back he traveled day and night, returning to Shimotsuke. Relaying to his lord, Ashikaga Yoshiyasu, Tametomo’s message in full detail, he presented the gift of the treasured sword Kojirigaeshi, and introduced Tomowaka to his lord’s presence. Yoshiyasu admired Tametomo’s fidelity to principles and was pleased that Tomowaka had arrived safely, saying, “I sent my retainer, Tokikazu, to Ōshima with a letter to Tametomo saying that I wished to adopt you. From this day forward you will be my son.” Only then did Tomowaka understand his father’s compassion. With no opportunity to bid farewell to his family, he recalled only his father’s wrath and being tied to a kite as punishment, landing on the shore of some unfamiliar bay, and then being kidnapped by some thief. But he let none of that show in his face. He thanked Yoshiyasu for his kind regard. Yoshiyasu admired the boy’s cultivated manners and speech. The next day he assembled his elder councilors and said, “My wife departed from this life too soon. I am over fifty years old now and have no heir. But in autumn over seven years ago when I was hunting in the nearby mountains, I spent a night in a humble cottage and had a liaison with a young woman there. She conceived, but died soon after giving birth to a boy. I



secretly had Yanada Tokikazu raise him, and he is now seven years old. I am ashamed not to have informed you of this, but he is my only natural child, and so I wish to make him my legitimate heir. Are there any objections?" Everyone was delighted, saying, "For many years now we have lamented the absence of a young lord. This good fortune is most welcome." Yoshiyasu then chose an auspicious day for the formal introduction of Tomowaka as his heir. Food and drink were amply supplied, and each retainer expressed felicitation and was given an audience with the new young lord. None of them knew that Tomowaka was Tametomo's child. It was common knowledge in both town and country that Tametomo, having been slandered by Mochimitsu, was unable to escape the punishment of an imperial force and so, after slaying wife and child, set his house ablaze and then took his own life. Tomowaka was grieved to hear that, secretly mourned and for some time shut himself away. Yoshiyasu then showed all the more compassion for the boy. After the period of mourning had expired, Yoshiyasu arranged for his instruction in the household business of archery and horsemanship, as well as reading and

writing. He proved to be exceptionally talented, and served his adoptive father with all filial devotion.

Time flew, and it was the year Angen 2 [1176]. Tomowaka was thirteen years old, and as he grew in understanding, he increasingly lamented his parents' violent death and regretted the fact that he was not there to share in their end. He divulged these secret thoughts to Yanada and together they went to the Hachiman Shrine in Ashikaga to confine themselves for a period of prayer. He prayed that he might at least be granted a dream of his real father and mother. As he dozed, a boy with his hair bound up on both sides suddenly appeared in a dream and addressed Tomowaka, "An edict from the great god: if you set up this paper shrine offering by the side of the road, it will be your guide. And if you go in the direction it indicates, you will certainly meet your father and your mother. Decide quickly!" Then he handed the shrine offering to Tomowaka, who was startled awake and found it on his lap. He found it all so strange and so sacrosanct that he wakened Tokikazu and told him all that he had seen in the dream. Thus Tomowaka's belief deepened and he was inspired by the divine blessing of the deity. Taking the paper offering back to the residence, he related everything to his adoptive father, then saying, "I request a temporary leave of absence." Inspecting the paper offering, Yoshiyasu was filled both with dread and with reverence, saying, "You are still very young, but you have been blessed with this vision because of your filial piety. But it will not do if knowledge of this becomes public. I shall not tell anyone about this, and let others think that you are ill and are going off with Tokikazu for a cure. Everything seems so uncertain, but since you'll be under the guidance of a deity, all will go well." Then he handed a sword to Tomowaka. "When you first came here, this was given to me from Tametomo, so I'll let you take it as a parting gift. Even if your parents are still alive, since seven or eight years have passed you might not recognize each other. If that is the case, this sword will serve as proof. Go ahead and make preparations for your journey." Then he summoned Tokikazu, giving him instructions and cautions and supplying ample travel funds. Tomowaka humbly accepted the sword, prepared for the journey in all secrecy and, tucking up the hem of his clothing and tying on his sedge hat, surreptitiously set out with Tokikazu. When they set up the paper offering to determine the direction in which they should travel, it fell to the west. So they set out for the western provinces on the Nakasendō Road. After that, two or three times when they came to forks in the road, they again set up the paper offering for directions. Crossing mountains and bodies of water, they stayed at inns each night and walked each day.

They walked on with one or the other in the lead until they had covered a great distance, finding themselves in a country area called Miyahara on the border between Bungo and Higo. It was part of the Naoiri District of Bungo, but close to Aso in Higo. The road was well enough beaten, but there were lakes and inlets here and there that had to be crossed, and there was nothing around but fallen reeds and rushes, offering no place to rest or to lodge.

Chapter Twenty-Nine

Falling ill on the way, Tokikazu meets with misfortune,
Stuffed into a basket, Tomowaka kills an enemy.

Directed by the paper offering, Tomowaka and Tokikazu traveled to the far western provinces. They had just passed Miyahara near the boundary of Bungo and Higo, and were on their way to Aso when Tokikazu suddenly felt a pain in his chest, such that he thought he might die. Determined not to fall behind, he forced himself to walk, mustering all of his determination. Here was a stalwart warrior who thought nothing of facing down a host of enemies, but could not defeat illness. Since he was lagging behind, Tomowaka turned to him and said, "Hey, Tokikazu, since this morning you seem to be distressed and the color of your face has gotten worse. We've often ended up sleeping in the open on this trip and you've only had light clothing. You've caught a cold, haven't you? Let's rest for a while under that tree." Planting his walking stick firmly on the ground and catching his breath, Tokikazu said in a pained voice, "I haven't felt well these two or three days, and I must seem quite unreliable to you. I kept thinking 'I'll feel better tomorrow' and pushed on to this point, but there seems to be no way to cure what is ailing me. But if I stop and rest a while and calm my mind, I'm sure I can make it to this evening's lodgings. Please don't worry." Alarmed and anxious, Tomowaka faithfully consoled him, saying, "In that case, let's stay longer at tonight's lodgings. You need to see a doctor, but around here there isn't even a house where we could get hot water, and there are no amenities at all. Even if it's already wet with dew, let's rest a while under that tree." Then parting a way through the weeds he set down his sedge hat for Tokikazu to sit on, then took medicine out of his breast pocket and gave it to him. Filled with gratitude, Tokikazu wept in spite of himself and pleaded, "On a journey like this I'm the one who should provide a cushion for you, but here you are graciously giving me medicine. Since you left Shimotsuke, you've slept in the open and been buffeted by winds, and whenever you hear the cries of geese over the long and winding shore you must long for home. It must sadden you to hear the vesper temple bells or to have to spend time under trees sheltering from the rain, but since filial piety is the supreme virtue, you are not distressed by any of those things. I am weary of walking, though the remaining journey is long, and to have to stop by a moss-covered mound is to regret the day's loss at sunset, I cannot even

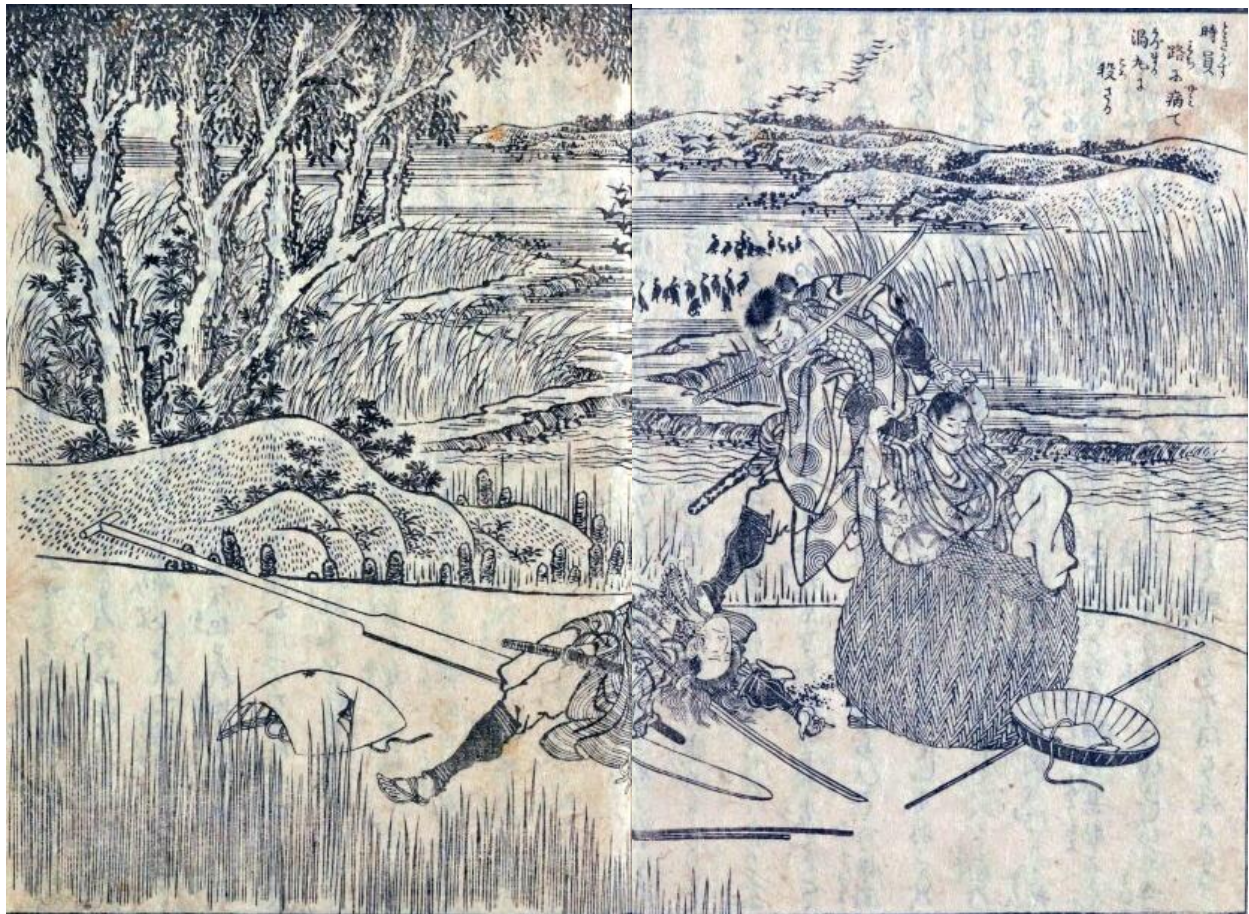
serve as a walking stick or any kind of support for you, and it pains me in my useless condition to have to be cared for by you.” He attempted to push onward, but was unable to.

Though there is no reason to be surprised at what so ordinarily happens in this life, if he were to leave this world, on whom could Tomowaka rely for support? And how would he be able to return? He was not even able to get out the words “Oh, how wretched,” but the expression on his face said it. Unable even to raise his head because of the distress he felt, he just rolled over on the grass. Three or four locusts hopped out of the way, but the cries of insects suddenly grew quiet all around. It was difficult for Tomowaka to bear the sight, and he put his arms around Tokikazu, helping him to sit up and rubbing his back, then he said, “How are you feeling, Tokikazu? If you were to die, how could I continue on this long journey alone? It should be a simple matter for our tutelary deities to save you from an illness like this.” Then he prayed, “If you gods could look upon such loyal devotion with compassion, then please, show your efficacy.” He seemed forlorn, and Tokikazu was more concerned about Tomowaka’s future than about his own suffering. Just to think about what might happen pained him. He raised his head and said, “How could I possibly die? I think if I were to drink a bit of water I’d feel better, but I’m not even able to fetch any.” Then Tomowaka shook the dew off leaves onto some paper and gave it to Tokikazu to drink. Thinking that this might be his last drink in this life, he felt himself weakening, and was not even able to say “I am unworthy of this.” The pain only grew more unbearable.

Just then a man came along with a huge fish basket tied to the end of a rudder that he carried over his shoulder. On his side was a whale knife. This Kumode no Uzumaru, the villain who in autumn of Kaō 2 [1170] led his pirate band in an attack on the high priest Suenori’s boat at Auhi Bay in Sanuki. Most of his henchmen were killed by Tametomo, but he barely managed to escape by diving under the waves. He had spent years wandering about in the western provinces and ended up in that area, but after losing his men he had not been able to accomplish much. He had tried his hand at fishing, but because he was so self-indulgent, everyone either despised or feared him. That day, Uzumaru had been fishing in the inlet of Nawari, but had not caught much, and as the sun was sinking into the sea he took in his pole, put his hooks away, and was just passing that way when he saw Tokikazu lying ill by the side of the road and Tomowaka, a handsome youth, next to him. He perceived that these travelers were no ordinary people, and an evil design took shape in his mind. He said to himself, “They must be from a well-off family

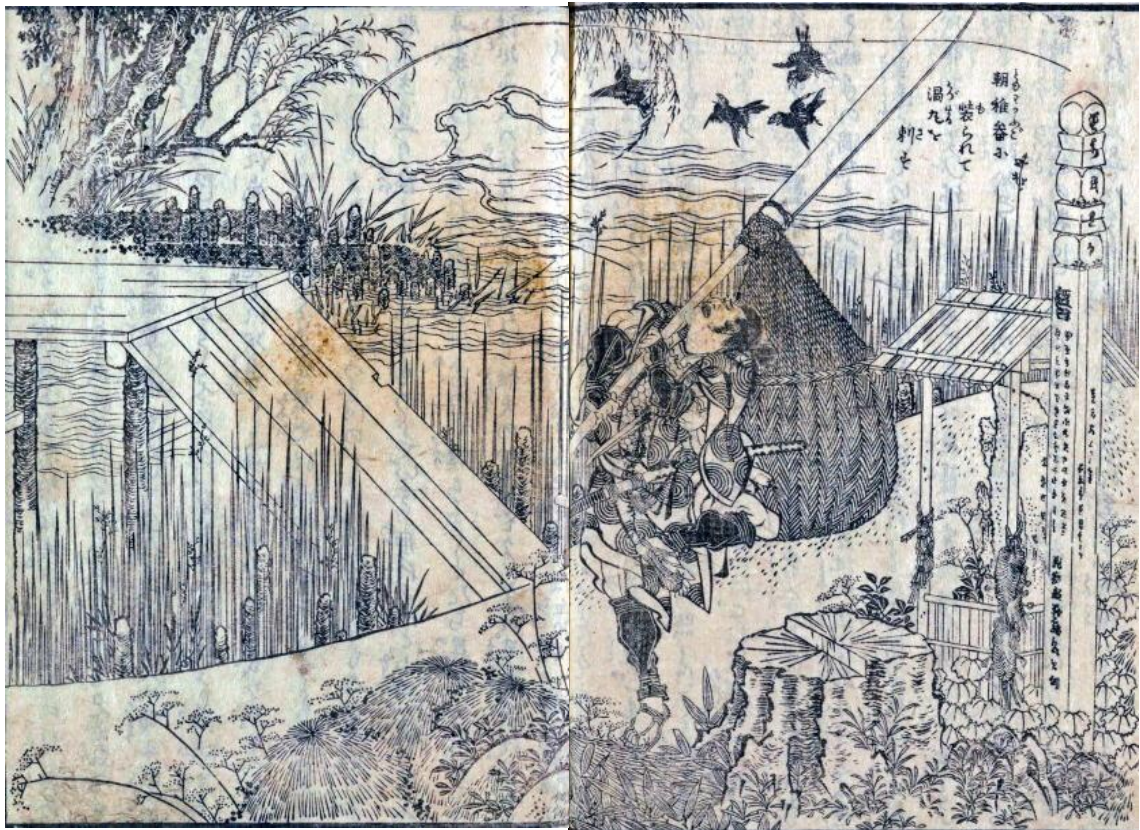
and have absconded from their hometown because of some trouble. They both look so haggard on this journey. But they must have something in their pockets. The man appears brave, but in his weakened condition it would be easy to kill him. It would be better, though, to trick them. If I take care of the older one first and steal his travel money, then I could take that good-looking boy and sell him to a temple as a page boy. That would get me plenty of money for drink. Yeah, that's what I'll do." Laying out that scheme in his mind, he smiled to himself, then looked back on Tokikazu and said, "Oh, what a pity! On top of the weariness of travel, for your companion to fall ill, it must be very miserable for a boy like you. I have some very good medicine at my home. I've tried it for many years, and it works wonders. Come with me, young man, and I'll give you some." Tomowaka was elated, saying, "As you can see, we're far from any human habitation and my companion has suddenly fallen ill, but there is no way to call a doctor here. If your home is not far, please take me with you, and let me have some of that medicine." Hearing this, Tokikazu raised his head and said with a note of suspicion, "No, that would be too rash. If I rest here a while, I'll be fine. It would not do for you to go off with someone you don't know." Uzumaru chuckled, "Why be so suspicious of people? My house is only about half a mile from here. As the proverb says, 'In traveling, fellowship; in life, kindness.' My occupation takes me here and there, and I should bring the medicine here myself, but I have an aged mother and small children at home, and am not free to come and go as I wish. If you prefer to refuse my sincere offer of help, I won't insist. But it's foolish to remain in a place like this when the autumn night is falling fast and there is danger from wild beasts and brigands." Then muttering to himself, "I can't waste my time on such unreasonable types," he hurried off toward Aso.

For a moment, Tomowaka watched the retreating figure of the man, then said to Tokikazu, "That man might have a fearsome face, but it's not possible to judge people's hearts by their appearance. If he has some effective medicine that could cure you, there would be no greater fortune. Isn't this a blessing from our tutelary deity? He can't have gone far. I'll go call him." Before he had even finished speaking, he dashed off after the man. Still feeling anxious, Tokikazu forgot his pain and called out, "Wait!" But Tomowaka was already out of sight. Then as Tokikazu was apprehensively awaiting Tomowaka's return, he could faintly hear distant temple bells, insects began chirping in the grass, the thickets of bamboo grew dark, and birds joined their mates to roost for the night. Chilly winds sweeping down from the mountain bit his flesh. Worried about Tomowaka, he forced himself to get up, saying to himself, "If that man's house is



indeed only half a mile from here, the young master ought to have returned by now. Why hasn't he come? Oh, how wretched!" Using his sword as a cane he stood up and tried to walk on his unsteady feet. Wavering, he was about to tumble into a rick of rice straw when from out of the stack the thrust of a broadsword pierced his back. With a cry of alarm and pain, Tokikazu fell on his face. He struggled to look up and saw Kumode no Uzumaru still grasping the blood-stained broadsword as he pushed his way out of the rick and silently approached, giving Tokikazu a sidelong glance and laughing derisively as he said, "What an intrepid life even in a weakened body! On top of being sick, you've been stabbed and still won't die, huh? Well then, in your dying moment let me explain my plan. Even though you're in pain, listen well. Everything I said—about the marvelous medicine, about the aged parent and small children—all of it was a lie so that I could kill you all the more easily, rob you, and sell that good-looking boy. It's not often that I run into an opportunity like this to fatten my wallet, so I enticed the boy with a display of kindness, waylaid him, then gagged him and stuffed him into a fish basked. Since he's bound and gagged, he's like a bird in there with all those fish, but I'll let him bid you farewell. Die in

peace!” Thus mocking the wounded man, Uzumaru dragged the fish basket from behind the rick. Gritting his teeth and with fire in his eyes, Tokikazu raged, “Sick and incapacitated, I’ve ended up not only being beaten by a petty thief like you, but my master has been taken prisoner. My martial fortune has run out. If I must fade away like dew in the field, I’ll have the pleasure of one stroke of the sword.” With that he drew his sword and tried to cut the shin of Uzumaru, who deftly dodged the blade, kicked it away, and planted his muddy foot on Tokikazu’s head, rendering him immobile. Then fixing his widened eyes on the weakened man, he shouted, “What do you mean by ‘petty thief’? Throughout Shikoku I was known as Kumode no Uzumaru and had scores of men under my command and there was nothing I wanted that I couldn’t get. But because of certain circumstances, I lost my men and have been hiding out here. Slaughtering the likes of you is easier than smashing a puppet. I’ll send you on your way out of this life!” Then adjusting his grip on the hilt, he drove his sword through Tokikazu’s throat all the way to the ground. Blood gushed out, and with a momentary flailing of his arms and legs, Tokikazu gave up the ghost. Ah, how pathetic, how tragic! With no inn for rest on the ten-thousand league path to the underworld, in whose house will he end up? A transient end without even a grave.



Wiping the blood off his sword, Uzumaru took Tokikazu's money and clothing, then peering into the fish basket said gloatingly, "Don't be surprised or afraid, my boy, I definitely won't kill you. I'm only going to sell you as a page boy to a major temple, where you can resign yourself to the sweet nothings of the Great Master of Kōya.¹ I've made an unusually good haul today, both goldfish and a merboy.² How happy I am!" Then without haste he headed for home with the basket on his back, humming a tune as he went. Tomowaka was torn with remorse at letting himself be tricked by Uzumaru when he was only trying to save Tokikazu. When he dashed off he was determined to catch up with Uzumaru, who was lying in wait for him, all at once binding him, gagging him, and stuffing him into a fish basket where he was tangled in nets. Then with the basket on his back Uzumaru went back part of the way, killed Tokikazu, and helped himself to all their money and belongings. Tomowaka had both seen and heard all of this through chinks in the basket, but as mortified as he was, being bound in nets there was nothing he could do to save his companion or avenge his death. Being securely gagged he was not able to say anything, but the cords binding him had become loose. He quietly untied them, took out the short sword Kojirikaeshi, and thrust it from inside the basket into Uzumaru's back until the tip appeared from his chest. Blood spurted out along with a cry from Uzumaru, who fell down on the spot. Thinking "Thank God!" Tomowaka pulled the sword out, cut the nets over him, and tore the gag from his mouth. He jumped out of the basket and, grabbing Uzumaru by the hair, put the blade against his chest, reviling him, "When a bird in distress comes to him, even a hunter will take pity on it.³ And yet you see someone lying on the ground with illness and devise a twisted plot. You name yourself, taking pride in your lack of compassion. What a despicable villain! If I hadn't been tied up, there's no way you could have put me in this basket. If Tokikazu hadn't been incapacitated with illness, there's no way you could have slain him. Know that this is Heaven's punishment for your treachery!" Then after the blade was thrust three more times into his chest, Uzumaru expired.

Thus, Tomowaka avenged Tokikazu's death and would seem to have vented his anger. But it was dark, and on this remote path he was in dire straits. He no longer had even the companionship of passing geese or monkeys in the trees. If he left Tokikazu's remains there, they

¹ That is, Kūkai who, according to popular legend, instituted the practice of keeping catamites at temples.

² *Kingyo to ningyo*, the *kin* alluding to the money.

³ This saying is found in *Yanshi jiaxun*, a collection of the personal philosophy of Yan Zhitui (531-591), a painter, philosopher, and politician during the period of the Northern and Southern dynasties.

would only end up being devoured by wild beasts. He hesitated, wondering what to do, and finally hit on an idea. Pulling the body up, he managed to put it in the basket. Then he took some paper out of his breast pocket, but in the dark found it difficult to write a description of what had happened. Just then a fox fire began to burn from within a clump of grass. It illuminated the area around him. He wondered at first whether it was autumn fireflies or a fox fire, but was not surprised, concluding that there was a reason behind it. Using it for light, he took out a short brush, dipped it in an ink container, and wrote, "On this evening of this month, two of us were traveling on this route when my companion was slain by the thief Kumode no Uzumaru, and I in turn killed Uzumaru on the spot. But this place is remote from any human habitation, and I do not know where I could make an appeal. Please bury the remains of my companion." He then tied the message to the basket. He opened up Uzumaru's breast pocket, took back the money, and from that amount left four or five *ryō* in the basket to cover burial expenses. Then he thought to consult the paper offering to determine the direction in which he might find lodging, but it was nowhere to be found. Tomowaka was dumbfounded. Tokikazu's untimely death had left him with no one to depend on, and now without even the paper offering he was like a blind man without a cane, leaving him totally lost. Had even the tutelary deity abandoned him? As he stood there in panic and confusion, the fox fire rose and illuminated the path as if to guide him. With tears in his eyes, Tomowaka realized what was behind it, saying to himself, "Well, Tokikazu, your body has died here, but you lead me with your spirit. That kind of loyalty is rare in this world. I'll leave my movements up to you." Then with the glow of the fox fire as his guide, hardly aware of it he ran fifteen or sixteen leagues. About the time it began to dawn, he stopped by a mountain whose name he did not know. He was of course utterly exhausted, but on this mountain path there was no dwelling where he might find rest. As he looked about, close to the mountain peak there seemed to be smoke rising. That must be someone's dwelling, perhaps that of a woodcutter. As he zigzagged his way up the mountain through the dense pampas grass, his feet were bleeding and the hem of his clothing was sodden with morning dew. When he finally reached the place, he discovered that it was a mountain fortress.

It appeared to be the dwelling of someone prestigious, not what one would expect to find deep in the mountains. Somewhat off to the side was a small gate, which was probably a back entrance. It was unguarded at the time, and he went inside. On the right was what appeared to be a garden where colored maple leaves blended elegantly with pines. In the surrounding hedge

birds were chirping, and the scene conveyed the splendor of autumn. The several folding doors were partly open, and inside he could see a refined woman and a boy of six or seven gathering nuts. It was like a scene from the *Tale of the Peach Blossom Spring*,⁴ or an enchanted cave in which he might see Cuinyang.⁵ Now this place was in Mount Kihara in the Mashiki district of Higo province, the elegant woman gathering nuts was Shiranui, and the boy was Sutemaru. Seven years had already passed since Tametomo settled in this mountain, and Sutemaru was six years old. He was mature for his age, clever in all matters, no less than Pu Yi or Bo Yi.⁶ But his parent tried to keep his extraordinary abilities from attracting attention, and did not hire a nurse. At the crack of dawn on the preceding day, Tametomo had set out with Kiheiji on a pilgrimage to Aso Shrine to offer a petition to the god, and had not yet returned. The retainers were out harvesting early ripening rice in the mountain fields. To while away the boredom, Shiranui and her son had ventured out into the garden and were gathering nuts. Just then, Tomowaka went around to the garden gate and, assuming that this must be the lady of the house, removed his sedge hat and addressed her, saying, "I have come from the distant eastern provinces in search of my parents. I became separated from the retainer who was accompanying me, and have wandered lost in this mountain. I am too exhausted to go back down, and would be most grateful if you would allow me to rest here for a while." Shiranui looked at him carefully and replied, "How very strange! From ancient times this mountain has been under a divine curse, and not even woodcutters climb it. And yet you, traveling by yourself, manage to wander here. We have never been glad to receive visitors here. My husband is away and has not yet returned. I could not very well decide by myself whether to let you rest here. Identify yourself, and tell me where you are from." Both the inquirer and the inquired seemed as distant in mind from one another as drifting clouds, leaving everything uncertain.

⁴ *Taohuayuanji*, by the poet Tao Yuanming (c. 365-427), describes a lost utopia.

⁵ Cuinyang, a woman of incomparable beauty, appears in the Tang dynasty story *You xian ku* by Zhang Zhuo (658-730).

⁶ Pu Yi and Bo Yi, both legendary figures in China who made important cultural contributions. In *Wu za zu* they are also described as having been child prodigies.

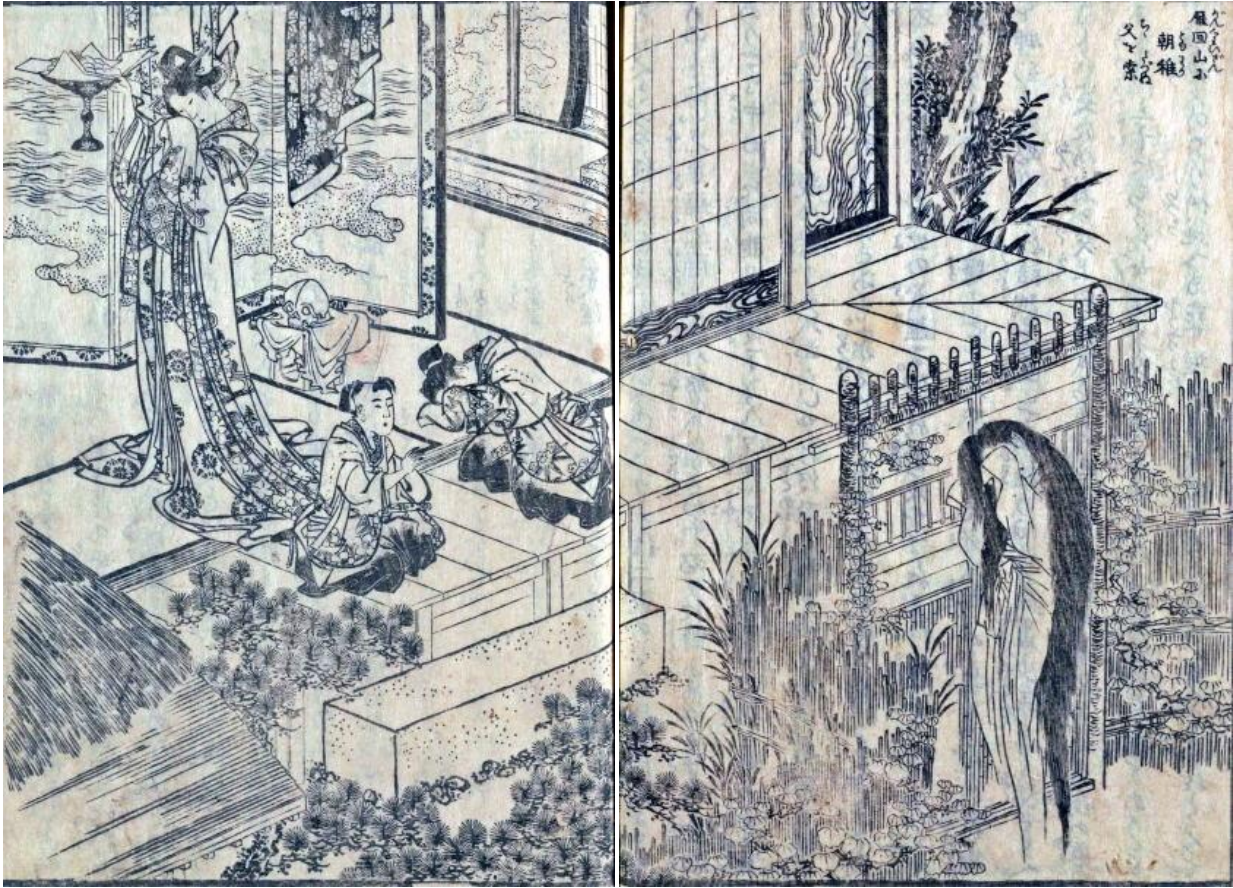
Chapter Thirty

The filial boy seeks his parents on Mount No-Geese,
On the beach of Mizumata, a fisherman deifies Tametomo.

Since the lady asked Tomowaka about the country of his origins, there was no longer any reason to conceal it, and he said, “I am from Ashikaga in the province of Shimotsuke, but I was not born there. For over six years since the summer when I was seven years old I have been cared for by my adoptive family, and during that time I have wanted for nothing. The only thing that saddened me was the report I heard that my parents and siblings met with an unnatural death seven years ago, and I have not forgotten that feeling of loss even for a moment. I prayed night and day to our tutelary deity that I might meet my parents again, even if only in a dream. My prayer was answered and I received an extraordinary vision. My adoptive father gave his permission, and accompanied by one of our retainers, a certain Yanada, I secretly set out on a journey to the western provinces, uncertain whether or not the person I sought was there. And then last night at Miyahara, the man accompanying me was killed by the robber Kumode no Uzumaru, and though I avenged his death, I was left with no retainer and felt utterly desolate. In my helpless state, a strange flame led me and I ended up wandering in this mountain. Dawn came and the sun rose high, but everything still seemed like a dream, and I am unable to make sense of it. You can guess what a wretched state I’m in.” Then he blew his nose. As Shiranui listened, she wondered if this might be Tomowaka, whose name she knew from her husband’s accounts, and her mind was agitated. But putting on an indifferent front, she asked, “It is a rare example of filial piety that you should travel such a great distance over mountains and seas in search of family. But if those you seek are no longer in this world, what hope do you have of achieving your aim? Who, then, were your parents?” Realizing that a vague response would not do, Tomowaka answered in a low voice, “My father came to adulthood in this province, and formerly exercised control over all of Kyushu, his influence extending even to the capital. But following the Hōgen disturbance, he was exiled to Ōshima. He was Hachirō Tametomo.” He had barely finished speaking when Sutemaru tugged at his mother’s sleeve and said, “That’s my father!” Shiranui hurriedly covered his mouth with her sleeve, scolding him, “This boy should watch his mouth! There are lots of men in the world named Hachirō. Don’t talk such nonsense.” She tried to conceal her agitation with a smile, then turning to Tomowaka, said, “Then I gather

from what you have said that you are the orphaned son of the young master Hachirō, who never went back on his word. And so even if he were still alive and present, he would not likely acknowledge a child he had once abandoned. And yet if he were to hear of such filial devotion sending you on a distant journey like this, how could he not take pity on you? Be that as it may, you must be starved, so I'll give you something to eat. Come this way." Then leading Sutemaru by the hand Shiranui stood up. Though his mind crowded with various suppositions, he could not refuse, and followed her to a small parlor where the three were then seated without order of rank.

As one might expect for a child, Sutemaru seemed pleased to have gained a new companion and immediately warmed up to him, lining up in front of him the nuts he had gathered in the garden, saying, "You may eat these," entertaining his guest in his own small way. Familiarity no doubt grew naturally from shared lineage. Tomowaka did not take any of them, but said with a note of bitterness and unconsciously moving closer to the lady, "There is some reason why you reacted the way you did when I announced my father's name and this boy said 'That's my father!' I heard that my father's principal wife, Shiranui, was killed in Dazaifu during the Hōgen era, but somehow this place seems like my father's hideout, and I have a feeling that you might be Shiranui. If you are the phantom of a departed soul, you would not identify yourself as such." Shiranui backed away, saying, "Those are the thoughts of a distracted boy. I have no connection with the young master Hachirō. But hearing your accounts of him, and because of your filial devotion, I have invited you in as a sort of consolation. If I were really Shiranui, I would have you stay here many nights and would like to see the joyous expressions on your faces and father and son are reunited. But in this fickle world, affection is no easy substitute for duty, and would the young master really be one to forget the warrior's vow he once made out of pity for his child? If he is your father, you must certainly realize what his intentions are. Think of the distress that would cause for Shiranui, and you could not resent her as a mean-spirited step-mother if she did not allow a reunion. But even though she had not given birth to you, since you would be her husband's child she would also be your parent, and certainly could not disregard you. She would cherish you even more than a child she had born. She would very much like to keep you here, and it would pain her that she could not. Being the man that he is, the young master would soon resign himself, but think of a mother's sorrow if you were to meet but once and then depart without any likelihood of ever meeting again. If you had never come looking for him, there would never be such sorrow, for him or for you. And the lament would not



only be for the present, but whether in good times or bad would never be forgotten. Give up on this short-lived parental bond, return to the east and serve your adoptive father faithfully. If you inherit his position and become a model of warrior ideals, there could be no greater filial devotion than that. Please be sensible.” Her voice was like rain falling in this clouded mountain. From what she said, Tomowaka was even more certain that she was indeed Shiranui, but could not very well ask. Wiping away his tears, he pleaded, “Even if my father is still in this world, as you say, how could I take offense if as a matter of principle he did not identify himself? But if at least I can be assured that he is alive, then it will have been worth it to come here. If you tell me in secret, as his child could I ever betray him by divulging it to others? Please, have mercy, and let me know.” Finding his tears infectious, Sutemaru also wiped his eyes and said, “Hey, mother, it would be so much fun if I had a big brother like him to play with. Why don’t I have one? Let him stay here, and he can be my big brother.” Hearing those words, Shiranui could no longer bear it and said tearfully, “After losing one’s parents, brothers are the dearest of all. ‘Though

brothers may fight at home, in the world they'll defend one another from slights'¹ is what an ancient Chinese poem says. Even good friends may fall out of favor with each other, but will never measure up to brothers, especially when the brothers are on good terms. If they are both close to one another and are filial, then they are a joy to their parents. Though I did not give birth to him, I too have a child, and you also have older brothers, four of them.² The duties imposed on us in this world are complex, and sorting them out is as difficult as making one's way through broom grass. I have spoken of many disheartening things. Please don't get choked up by them." After such persuading and prevaricating, she stood up and went into a back room where she opened up a portable shrine and took out an old robe. Placing it beside Tomowaka, she said, "Young man, please listen. I know nothing about your father. And yet one night in a dream, a woman of about thirty stood by my pillow and said, 'I am waiting for someone here. Do not bury me anywhere, just let me remain here.' I was startled awake, and next to my pillow was this robe and a skull. Now that I think about it, your face resembles that of the woman I saw in the dream. Thus, it was your birth mother who must be waiting here for her child. Even if you don't meet your father, take this with you back to the east, and if you think of and mourn for its owner, this will be a comfort to you. Please look at it." As she unfolded the robe, the skull that was wrapped inside had rotted. It was a gift that chilled him to the bone. Inspecting it from various angles with eyes clouded by tears, Tomowaka felt as if his heart might melt away. Placing the keepsake on the sleeve of the robe, he tried to speak but was choked up as his tears flowed unstoppably. Both Shiranui and Sutemaru, who was sitting on her lap, wept with him. Viewing this scene, Shiranui could no longer bear it, and wondered whether, although contrary to her husband's intentions, she should perhaps clearly announce their identity and have Tomowaka meet his father, even if only for one night. But no, that would be even more disrespectful toward Yoshiyasu than toward her husband. At any rate, a parent who is like bog wood that can produce no blossoms³ must stealthily go up to the blossoming capital and confront Kiyomori. Whether we win or lose, our lives together as a couple will not be long and we must not become so entangled in affection that

¹ A phrase from *The Classic of Poetry (Shijing)*, "Xiao ya" chapter (兄弟鬩於牆, 外禦其務).

² She is referring to the two sons of Sasarae and the two sons of Nyoko.

³ An allusion to Minamoto no Yorimasa's (1106-1180) death poem as recorded in *The Tale of the Heike*:

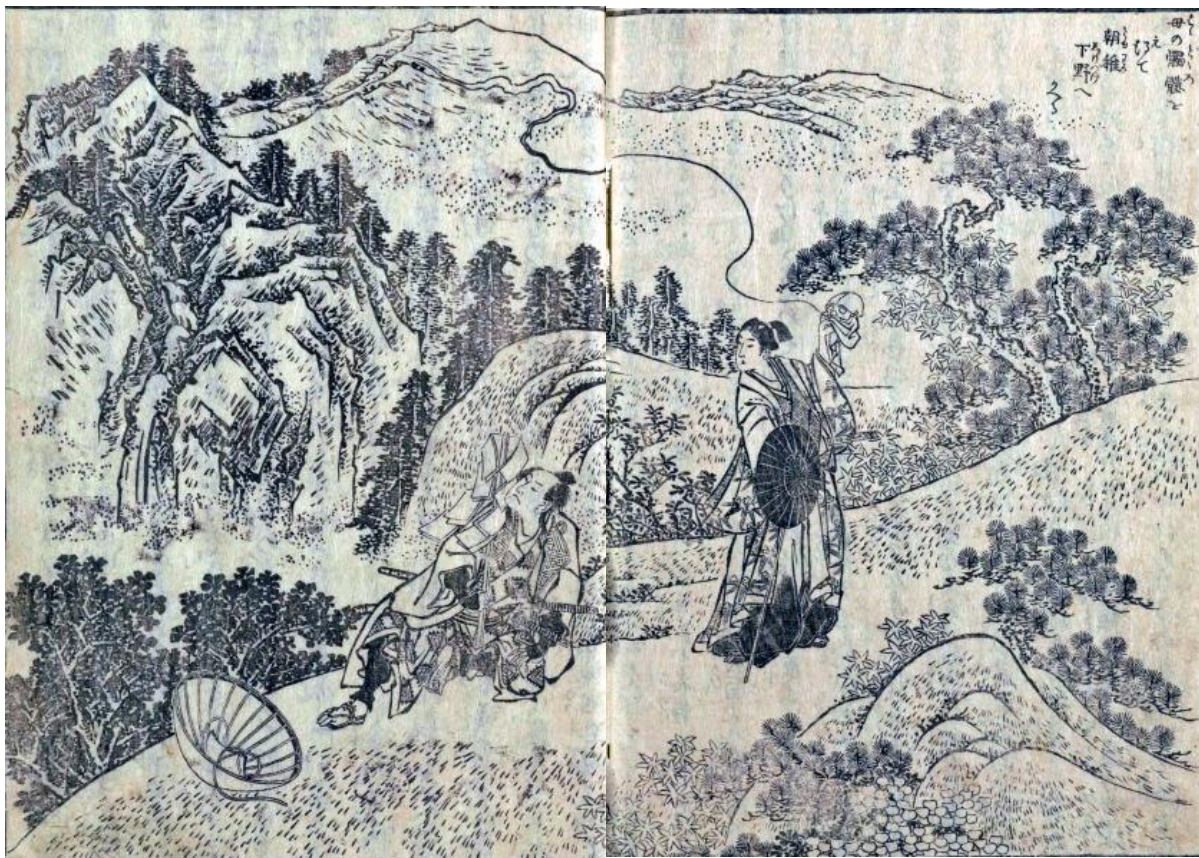
Umoregi no hana saku koto mo nakarishi ni mi no naru hate zo kanashikarikeru

Though a piece of bog wood can produce no blossoms,
yet how lamentable that things should have ended thus.

we neglect faithfulness to duty. Reconsidering and determining that she must not commit such an error, Shiranui reverted to a detached mien, saying, "Young man, my husband is away on a pilgrimage to Aso Shrine and has not yet returned. Our servants are all out working in the fields, and I am unable to entertain you properly. Since this is a mountain home, I have nothing but nuts to offer you, but if it would stave off your hunger I can also offer you some rice with millet. I'll prepare some for you." She stood up, but Tomowaka hurriedly stopped her, saying, "I am too agitated to have any appetite now. Just receiving my mother's skull fulfills the vision from my tutelary deity. I shall give up thoughts of my father and return immediately. If my father is still alive and comes here, please tell him that Tomowaka came from Shimotsuke. This is all regrettable." Then folding the kimono and dousing the bones with his tears, he was saddened by the transitoriness of life. Shiranui took from a box near her side a pair of golden hilt ornaments, saying, "These have been especially treasured by my husband for years and are meant to be heirlooms. You'll have a long journey back to Shimotsuke, but with the guidance of the god, may you have a safe return. It goes without saying, but find lodging early each evening and then set out before dawn. And if people offer you mushrooms you've never heard of or fish without scales, don't eat them. Here is a lunchbox full of rice, the kind our servants take out to the fields. That should satisfy your hunger at least for today. And don't lose the hilt ornaments." She handed them to him, fastened the lunchbox to his waist, and tightened his loose sash. She asked solicitously, "Do you have sufficient travel funds?" Raising the hilt ornaments above his head to show gratitude, Tomowaka then put them in his breast pocket and said, "The gift of these objects treasured by your husband is much like the gift of my mother's skull: I feel as if I have a memento of my father. I have ample travel funds from my adoptive father. My hope is that you will all take good care of yourselves, resist the onslaught of age, and enter the realm of immortality. After I return to the east, each time I watch the setting of the sun or moon I shall take comfort in knowing that I have a mother and father out in that direction." With these cordial words he bade farewell, both to Shiranui and to Sutemaru. Then with the kimono on his back he fastened on his sandals. Sad to see him go, Sutemaru went out with his mother to see him off, fretting, "Why can't he be my big brother? Why is he in such a hurry to leave? When will he come back? Mother, have him stay. Mother!" Shiranui humored him even as she drenched her sleeve. Hastening his steps so as to hide his tears, Tomowaka set off toward the foot of the

mountain. Shiranui watched him until he disappeared behind trees, and restrained Sutemaru from running after him. Then she returned and gave herself over to weeping.

Just then the door from the next room opened and who should enter but Tametomo with Kiheiji right behind him. Taken by surprise, Shiranui moved to the side of the room. Tametomo said to her, "I returned from Aso a while ago, and Kiheiji and I overheard everything that was said between you and Tomowaka. I was deeply moved by his sincere filial devotion, and at the same time admired the depth of your compassion. You handled it very well. But hearing that Yonada no Tokikazu was slain in Miyahara, and then Tomowaka avenged his death by killing Kumode no Uzumaru, I'm reminded that the villain Uzumaru was a thief who got away from me at Auhi Bay in Sanuki some years ago. At the age of thirteen, Tomowaka with his small arms killed the wretch and avenged the death of his retainer, and then came here to tell about it. With that kind of valor and filiality, he is fully worthy to be Yoshiyasu's son. What is there to be sorrowful about?" He appeared to be in good spirits, and Kiheiji also consoled Shiranui and praised Tomowaka fulsomely. Then Tametomo added, "I have been on this mountain seven years now. I thought that no one knew I was here, but oddly enough Tomowaka found his way here,



which means that others must know also. Even if our forces are not yet at full strength, there are those whose corpses should be exposed in the capital, so we must make our strike surreptitiously. Prepare boats for immediate departure!” Takama no Tarō and Isohagi assembled everyone under them and explained the situation. All responded with excitement, “Let’s move quickly!”

At that time Tomowaka was making his descent down the mountain contrary to his desires, aware as he was that he had been to his father’s house without meeting him or hearing him identify himself. He had not gone far when a traveler came hurrying toward him. Looking closely at him, he saw that it was none other than Yanada Tokikazu, who had been killed the night before at Miyahara! How could this be? Both suspicious and delighted, he asked dubiously, “Aren’t you Tokikazu? You must be his wandering ghost.” For his part, Tokikazu was pleased to see that Tomowaka was safe and sound, and approached him, explaining in detail, “You must think that I died. Last night I fell ill at Miyahara, and I recall that you ran after that man to ask for some medicine and I called after you for some time, but I don’t remember a thing after that. I was awakened by the cry of geese flying overhead, and found that I had not only recovered from my illness but actually felt ten times better than usual. But I found it strange that I was inside a fish basket. Finding the situation odd, I jumped out and began to look around the area, wondering where you had gone. All I found was the corpse of the big man who said he had medicine, all covered in blood and lying in the grass. Just then the moon came out from behind the clouds and I saw the note you had tied to the basket. It was then that I realized the sort of person Uzumaru was, and yet I did not have a single wound anywhere on my body. As if in a dream I again looked inside the fish basket and saw where a blade had pierced it. Perhaps the god Shō Hachiman had stood in for me. I said to myself that I was quite unworthy of such a divine blessing, and offered my humble thanks. Then putting in my pocket the money that the thief had taken, I inquired of the paper offering where I should go, and am so happy to have met up with you.” He gave the paper offering to Tomowaka, who saw that indeed a sword had cut it. It was all so mysterious. Reverently holding it above his head, Tomowaka offered thanks to the god for his protection, then said, “Though it is said to be a degenerate latter age, the gods still protect those whose hearts are sincere. Last night I was led by a fox fire to a mountain fortress over there and received the skull of my birth mother Sasarae. I thought that the fox fire was your spirit leading me, but it was actually Sasarae who led me to this mountain.” Then he told Tokikazu about Shiranui’s admonition and about Sutemaru. After long sighs, Tokikazu said,

“There can be no doubt that she is your father’s principal wife, Shiranui. So, she did not perish with her father Tadakuni in Dazaifu during the Hōgen disturbance, but must have escaped to this mountain. Perhaps the young master Hachirō also escaped from Ōshima, and the two of them got together again in this mountain fortress and had another child. Come on, let’s go back there and ascertain the truth of the matter.” Still beset with lingering regret, Tomowaka was ready to go back up the mountain when towering billows of clouds eerily arose, blocking their way. The clouds enveloped the entire mountain, making ascent impossible. Again seeing such a mysterious manifestations, it occurred to them that perhaps the god was refusing to allow a reunion of father and son. They abandoned that plan and went to Bungo the next day, thereafter pursuing a rapid course back and arriving in Ashikaga, Shimotsuke in a matter of days. There Tomowaka told his adoptive father, Yoshiyasu, everything that had happened on the journey, including events of Mount Kihara. When Tomowaka showed him the skull and the sword hilt ornaments, Yoshiyasu was unable to restrain tears, and whispered, “Your filial loyalty has been blessed by the gods of Heaven and Earth, granting you the bones of your birth mother, indeed an unexpected reward. And these hilt ornaments were treasured by my grandfather, Lord Hachiman Tarō Yoshiie, who named them Ushimono. They were passed down to his eldest son Tameyoshi, and I heard that after that they were given to Tametomo. I suppose that having faked his death when setting his house ablaze on Ōshima he secretly made his way to Mount Kihara in Higo where he was reunited with Shiranui, who bore his child. But since he is a righteous warrior who is a giant among men, perhaps he is not willing to identify himself to his son, let alone to anyone else. Though you were not able to meet him in person, you have received these Ushimono hilt ornaments, along with your birth mother’s skull, so you have come close to attaining your filial objective. Make sure that no one else knows of these things.” Then he cordially thanked Tokikazu for his services, rewarding him amply. He entombed Sasarae’s skull in the Bishamon Hall of Daigenzan Temple and had Buddhist memorial services conducted for Tameyori and Oniyasha. The sword Kijirikaeshi and the hilt ornaments Ushimono were long handed down in the Ashikaga family. Takauji⁴ gave them to his second son Motouji,⁵ Motouji gave them to his

⁴ Ashikaga Takauji (1305-1358), founder of the Ashikaga shogunate.

⁵ Ashikaga Motouji (1340-1367). Bakin was incorrect; Motouji was the fourth son of Takauji. He was appointed the first Chief Warlord (*kubō*) of Kantō.

son Ujimitsu,⁶ who gave them to his son Mitsukane,⁷ who gave them to his son Mochiuji,⁸ thus handing them down for four generations. According the *Kamakura ōsōshi*, on the twentieth day of the eleventh month of Ōei 22 [1414], gave the treasured sword Kojirikaeshi and the hilt ornaments Ushimono to his younger brother Lord Inamura⁹ of Mutsu Province.

But to return to our account, Tomowaka was initiated into manhood at the age of fourteen, assuming the name Ashikaga Tarō Yoshikane.¹⁰ That same year his adoptive father Yoshiyasu passed away (according to the genealogies, Yoshiyasu died in the fifth month of Hōgen 2 [1157] at the age of twenty-nine). The chief retainers and elder councilors met and sustained Yoshikane as the head of the Ashikaga family. Yoshikane donated much land to the Hachiman Shrine in Ashikaga. Then he moved relics from the Hachiman Shrine to the Ashikaga School, maintaining the same solemn rites, making it the home of the tutelary deity. The School was founded anciently by Ono no Takamura¹¹ by imperial license. After many years it burned down, but Takauji rebuilt it, and it appears in volume sixty-six of *Wakan sansai zue*¹² under the entry for Shimotsuke. Yoshikane also built the Bannaji Temple in Ashikaga, perhaps as a memorial for the soul of his birth mother. Yoshikane's posthumous Buddhist name is Bannaji. Yoshikane carried on the work of his adoptive father, being appointed as Assistant Magistrate of Hachijōin, finally being granted governorship of Kōzuke, Shimotsuke, and Musashi provinces. He also served as Captain of the Left Division of Bureau of Horses and officer in the Ministry of Civil Administration, advancing to the lower fourth rank. He died during the reign of Tsuchimikado¹³ in the first year of Shōji [1199] (according to the family genealogy, he died in Bunji 1 [1185] at the age of eighty-four, a contradictory theory). The following five generations—Yoshuiji, Yasuiji, Yoriuji, Ietoki, and Sadauiji¹⁴—were all enfeoffed in the eastern

⁶ Ashikaga Ujimitsu (1359-1398), second Kantō *kubō*.

⁷ Ashikaga Mitsukane (1378-1409), third Kantō *kubō*.

⁸ Ashikaga Mochiuji (1398-1439), fourth Kantō *kubō*.

⁹ Ashikaga Mitsunao (1386-1440), name also read Mitsutada, was the second son of Ujimitsu and the younger brother of Mitsukane, not of Mochiuji.

¹⁰ Yoshikane (1154-1199) was actually the third son of Yoshiyasu.

¹¹ 802-853, noted poet and calligrapher.

¹² An encyclopedia published in 1712.

¹³ 1196-1231; r. 1198-1210, firstborn son of Gotoba.

¹⁴ In his text, Bakin confuses the order of Yoshikane's posterity. His son was Yoshuiji (1189-1255), grandson Yasuiji (1216-1270), great grandson Yoriuji (1240-1262), great-great grandson Ietoki (1268-1284), and great-great-great grandson Sadauiji (1273-1331).

provinces. Sadauji's son Takauji received an imperial command from Emperor Godaigo¹⁵ to attack and subdue the Rokuhara headquarters of the old shogunate and bring the realm under his dominion. That lasted for thirteen prosperous generations with the aid of the gods of the Hachiman Shrine and the spirit of Sutoku. We also read about Yoshikane in Ryōshun's¹⁶ *Nan Taiheiki*, which contains the following:

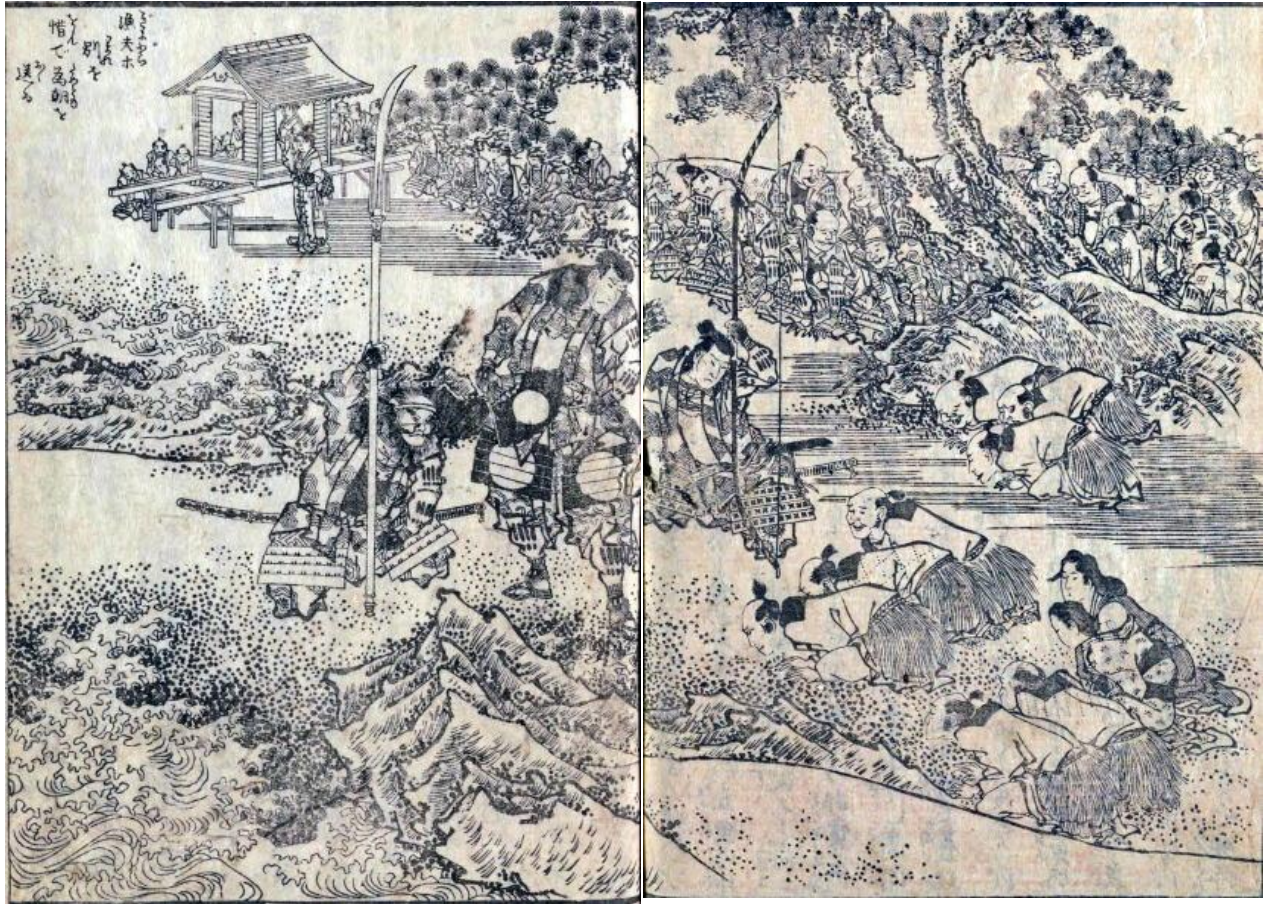
Lord Hachiman is another name for Lord Yoshiie, governor of Mutsu and commander of its naval base. His son was Yoshiyasu, whose son was Yoshikane, and so on through Yoshiuji and Yasuji, who is also known as Lord Hiraishi. His son was Yoriuji, officer in the Bureau of Civil Affairs. His son Ietoki was governor of Iyo, and his son Sadauji is known as the Sanuki lay monk. His sons were the Shogun (Takauji) and Lord Nishiki no Kōji (Tadayoshi).¹⁷ ... Now Yoshikane was eight feet tall and possessed greater strength than anyone. He was actually the son of Tametomo, and Yoshiyasu adopted him in his infancy. Wishing to avoid gossip he concealed this fact, and in the end no one knew of it. When he was approached by General Yoritomo, he again sought to avoid gossip and finally went insane by adhering to the falsehood. His generation passed without incident, and it is reported that sometime after his death his posterity acknowledged his insanity.

We have said all there is to say about Tomowaka (Yoshikane). Surprised by Tomowaka's visit, Hachirō Tametomo was deeply concerned. How much longer could he remain hidden? He should go secretly to the capital, conduct a night raid on Kiyomori, and avenge his father and brothers. Whether it ended in victory or defeat, he determined that he would not return alive. Accompanied by Shiranui, Sutemaru, and only thirty or so retainers, he set out from Mount Kihara. As he came to the shore near Mizumata, he could not forget the kindness the fishermen there had shown over the years, and so he called together the elders there and said, "I have grown weary of living here and want to go to Shikoku and seek a place to settle down. It's hard to say whether we shall ever meet again, and I'm even less certain that I'll ever see our house on Mount Kihara. All of the clothing and utensils we've left behind are for people here at the seaside, so please see to their fair distribution. We'll begin our voyage from here. I hope you can provide two seaworthy boats." Then he inquired about the cost. Everyone had regarded him as their

¹⁵ 1288-1339; r. 1318-1339.

¹⁶ Imagawa Ryōshun (1326-1420), also known as Sadayo, was a noted poet and military commander who served the Ashikaga shogunate.

¹⁷ Ashikaga Tadayoshi (1306-1352), Takauji's younger brother.



master, and out of each house people streamed, supporting the elderly and carrying infants, saying, “Our lord, why are you so heartless as to abandon us and go to Shikoku to live? Please spend the rest of your life here. We’ll do all we can to serve you.” Clutching his *hakama* and the sleeve of his robe, they would not let go. Tametomo felt compassion for them, but knew he could not stay. Brushing them aside, he walked toward the shore. The people continued to yearn for him, finally tearing off one of the sleeves of his robe. Then Kiheiji and Takama to Tarō urged the elders to supply two boats. Tametomo, Shiranui, and twenty retainers boarded one of them, while Half-mile Stone-throwing Kiheiji, carrying Sutemaru, seated himself in the other along with Takam no Tarō, Isohagi, and ten retainers. They took hold of rudders and set sail, rowing out into the open sea from the shore of Mizumata in Ashikita district, not knowing exactly where they were headed. It was the fifteenth day of the eighth month of Angen 2 [1176] during the reign of Emperor Takakura. The people on the shore were like infants longing for their mother. They waved with their hands and continued to shout, but soon there was no answer except the sound of surging waves.

Thus the people living by the shore had such respect for Tametomo that they constructed a shrine and deified him, placing in it the sleeve from his robe as the object of veneration and calling it the Yahachi Shrine. To this day, a festival is held there on the fifteenth of the eighth month. Three types of offerings are made: adzuki rice, fresh sea bass, and sweet saké. The following year when the shrine doors are opened on the festival day, the rice and the sea bass will have dried well, and the saké will have retained its flavor. The mice are afraid of these offerings and will not eat them. It is said that if one does, it dies on the spot. This Yahachi Shrine houses a fierce deity, and so the shrine doors are opened only on festival days. They say that prayers there are efficacious for curing smallpox. Also in the fishing village Tsunagi in Ashikita district there is a small shrine named after Tametomo where the object of veneration is a pair of formal *hakama*. South of Itami in Setsu province there is a shrine called Tametomo Hachiman. And I hear that in Kuramori in Owari province there is a Tametomo shrine. If one dies but does not perish, then one is a god.¹⁸ If one possesses no superior virtues at all, then will he be deified and venerated for ages to come? For a long time now I have described Tametomo's martial virtues, and that is why I have written this story. So what tales may be told of Tametomo and Shiranui—and of his children and followers—after they left Mizumata? You will need to read the next set of chapters to find out.

Addendum In the *Kōyō zuihitsu* it is written: “Southwest of Takeda village by the Takegawa River in Koma district, in Kami Miyachi village there is a Takeda Hachiman Shrine. In the mountains to the left of that shrine there is another shrine for Chinzei Hachirō Tametomo, where villagers say that prayers for peace and to cure smallpox are efficacious. According to the elders, when Tametomo escaped from Ōshima in Izu, he brought a demon child with him and lived there. Even now on Mount Funa in Nirasaki there is a place where Tametomo shot an arrow and hit a distant target. The ruins of that place where the demon child lived is called Wanizuka. Yet claims that Tametomo lived in Kai province are groundless. Most likely the sites associated with Asahara Hachirō Tameyori were incorrectly confused with Chinzei Hachirō Tametomo. Tameyori established the Minamoto line in Kai province, and he was born in Asahara village in

¹⁸ This enigmatic saying also appears in chapter 11 of Bakin's *Enseki* in a section titled “Kishinron”: “If one dies but does not perish, he is called a god. If one dies and is not worshiped, he is called a devil.”

Kose district.” I, Bakin, have investigated this. In the *Kamakura shogun fu*¹⁹ under the entry for Shōō 3 [1290], it is written: “In the third month the powerful archer Asahara Hachirō Tameyori of the Kai Minamoto committed atrocities in various provinces. Accordingly his territories were confiscated and he was hunted throughout several lands. He secretly entered the capital, reaching the palace at night and sequestering himself in the main hall. When warriors attacked, he committed suicide. On the arrows that he shot, ‘Tameyori, Chancellor of the Realm’ was inscribed.” Thus, the Tametomo Shrine in Kami Miyachi village as described in the *Kōyō zuihitsu* was no doubt established to pacify the angry spirit of Asahara Hachirō Tameyori. For that reason I have recorded this. There are many other erroneous legends.

¹⁹ Full title is *Kamakura shogun kafu*, by the historian and philosopher Hayashi Razan (1583-1657).

Chapter Thirty-One

Tametomo sets out on a voyage to the capital,
Shiranui is swallowed by the waves.

It was in autumn of Angen 2 [1176] during the reign of the eightieth emperor, Takakura, on the fifteenth day of the eighth month that Chinzei Hachirō Tametomo set out from Mizumata in the Ashikita district of Higo province with a company of thirty or so retainers in two fishing boats, intending to enter the capital secretly, attack Kiyomori, and avenge both his sovereign [Sutoku] and his father. In one of the boats, Tametomo and Shiranui kept the compass and were accompanied by about twenty retainers. In the other boat, his inheriting son Sutemaru (who, though his youngest child, was born of Shiranui and was thus the inheriting son due to her status) was accompanied by Half-mile Stone-throwing Kiheiji, Takama no Tarō, Isohagi, and ten or so retainers. The sky was clear with not a single cloud and over the wide expanse of the sea the waves were calm. A tail wind filled their sails. The sun soon set and the moon rose over the sea. Since it was the middle of autumn, its golden glow seeped through the sedge roofs of the boats and its glistening danced on the waves. The wind sweeping over the brine was chilly.

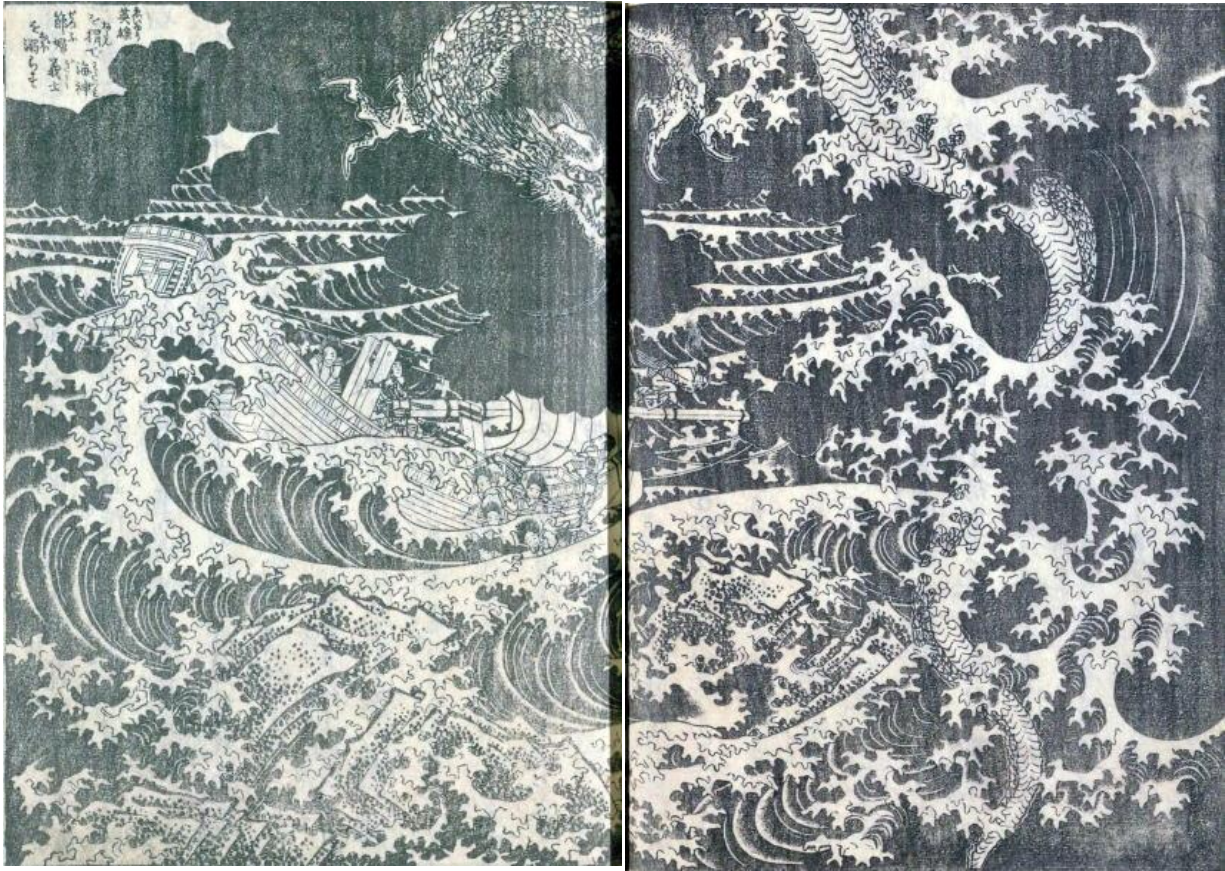
As dawn arrived, a dense fog arose, obscuring vision even for short distances and the boats were left to the mercy of the currents. Around noon the fog cleared, but they had no idea where they were out in the open sea. Strange fish appeared, having the appearance of carp but with bird-like wings. They had blue markings, white heads, and red mouths, and the sound they made was like the clucking of chickens as they flew over the waves in great numbers. For a time, the surface of the water was covered with a dirty foam, as if rice bran had been scattered over it. Large numbers of sea snakes surfaced on both sides of the boats. Everyone was filled with alarm at this unusual sight, and did not know what to make of it. Tametomo surveyed the conditions of the sky and the water. Shiranui said with a note of apprehension, “I grew up in the western provinces and then spent a decade traversing the islands of Izu and thus possess a good knowledge of winds when navigating. Generally speaking, in the south seas after the third month vital energy from the land flows from the south toward the north, and thus there is usually a southern wind. And after the first frosts of the ninth month, the vital energy from the land shifts to flow from north to south, and a northern wind is usual. If it reverses, the winds will become fierce, and when they rage it is called a gale. When they are unusually severe, it is called a

typhoon. Gales occur suddenly, and typhoons last for some time. A gale arises before you know it but soon subsides, while a typhoon can last through a day and a night, sometimes lasting even several days. Gales often arise from the first through the fourth months, while typhoons are frequent from the fifth through the eighth months. When boats on the open sea encounter a gale, the might manage to get through it, but a typhoon is very difficult. After the tenth month the wind is usually from the north, but gales and typhoons do not typically occur. From the fifth through the eighth months typhoons might come with the southern winds. When they are about to occur, first of all there is a wind from the north which shifts to one from the southeast, and then shifts again to one from the south, and finally to one from the southwest. When either a gale or a typhoon is about to occur, it is invariably preceded by rain. Clouds will cover part of the sky, and sometimes there will be a broken rainbow. These are the signs. When an typhoon occurs, the sign will be first of all a cloud billowing like a sail, reaching the middle of the sky and finally taking on the shape of the tail of an *unkyū*. An *unkyū* resembles a crab, and lives in the south seas. It has twelve legs protruding from either side of its body, its eyes are on its back, and its mouth is on its underbelly. When crossing these seas it often swims along, showing its back and traveling in the direction of the wind, so mariners call it *unkyū* sailing. Its shell is very hard, and it is said that in some foreign lands it is used as a crown. Look over there! Now the cloud in the middle of the sky looks like an *unkyū*. And I've also heard that when a typhoon is about to occur, a dirty foam appears on the water, a lot of sea snakes will arise, and there will be multitudes of flying fish. Whenever a helmsman sees that he will be afraid and will plan far ahead, taking down the sails, steadying the rudder and avoiding it. If he does not take these measure promptly, then the boat will invariably capsize. Three of these omens have already appeared. Men, why have you not yet taken down the sails?" Hearing Shiranui's fury, the crew sprang into action, taking down the sails. They tried to drop anchor, but the rope would not reach the bottom, and they panicked, not knowing what to do.

The boat carrying Sutemaru had been far behind, but it gradually caught up, pulling up alongside the other boat. Half-mile Stone-throwing Kiheiji and Takama no Tarō, stooping down on the prow, shouted to their master's ship, "Since early this morning the fog was so thick that we didn't know where we were headed. Though we were supposed to head east, I think maybe we've drifted south. Not only that, but the look of the sea is worrisome. What do you think?" Looking back at them, Tametomo replied, "Just as you say, there can be no doubt that our boats

have drifted to the south, evidence being the large numbers of flying fish, which are prevalent in the southern seas. I suppose we're already several scores of leagues south of Satsuma. Look, a threatening cloud has arisen, and so many sea snakes are on the surface of the water. Those portend a nasty wind. And there is no port where we could seek shelter. All we can do is await death. When such ill fortune comes along, there is nothing I can do. At this point, that should be no surprise." Knitting their brows, the other two said in all earnestness, "That may be, but to be aware of that and yet do nothing to prevent it seems like a lack of resourcefulness. Our boats are large and will not easily capsize. If we fasten them together and all of us row with all our might, we could surely come out of this alive." They were about to throw the hawsers over when Tametomo quickly stopped them, saying, "You are wrong. It would be very bad for parents and child to be in the same boat, sharing the same calamity. There are more than thirty altogether on my boat, but we won't necessarily all share the same bad fortune. When ten fish are caught in a net, two or three might escape. When I was on Ōshima in Izu province, I traversed the seven islands beginning with Hatchō and thought nothing of the difficulties of the fast current and the black current, making my home among a thousand leagues of billowing waves, but was never once blown off course by a typhoon. And it seems that it all owed to the protection by gods and buddhas. And so now as I was headed to the capital to attack the enemy of my sovereign and my father, if a thick fog appears and our boats go astray—moreover if as a result of winds and waves all of us make our graves in the bellies of fish—that can only be heaven-ordained fate. During the twelve months of every year, there will be a day of destructive wind. The fifteenth day of the eighth month is called *Kuixing tai*. The fourth star-mansion in the *ji-bi-yi-zhen* group all control the winds.¹ I'm not ignorant of these things. Yesterday was the period of *Kuixing tai*, and we set out without incident, but today if we run into a typhoon it will be difficult for us to get through it alive." Before he had finished speaking, a dragon appeared, spanning both ends of the boats. The water churned up as high as twenty feet as a fierce wind blew. The sky was clouded over and rain fell as if from overturned tubs. It was pitch dark in all directions, obscuring even each other's faces. With only their voices as guides they shouted and reassured each other, combining all of their strength to row. But the fury of the wind and rain only increased, tossing the boats around. Tall waves leaped inside the boats, challenging their efforts to bail the water out. Everyone was

¹ Ancient Chinese astronomy/astrology divided the heavens into twenty-eight "mansions" (*xiu*), further divided into four groups of seven. Kuixing was the Taoist god of fate, and *tai* is an abbreviation of typhoon.



falling over from exhaustion. The boat carrying Sutemaru was out of sight, and no one knew where it was. His mother cried out, “Are you there?” But there was no answer. Alas, it looked as if it had capsized.

Then wringing the brine out of her sleeves and standing up on her unsteady feet, Shiranui raised her voice, “Young master, it is impossible to save one life among thousands of deaths. They say that in the fortieth year of emperor Keikō’s² reign when Yamato Takeru³ went to subdue the eastern barbarians, as he left Sagami and headed to Kazusa he encountered a violent wind and his boat was blown off course and was about to capsize when his consort, Princess Oto Tachibana (the daughter of Oyama no Sukune of the Hozumi clan) jumped into the water in the place of her husband. Because of her sacrifice, the tempest immediately turned to calm and the boat arrived at the shore safely. Your martial valor is no less than that of Yamato Takeru. My character does not match that of Princess Oto Tachibana, but if I offer my life to the god of the sea, perhaps the winds will subside. When I was once dispirited, thinking that we might never

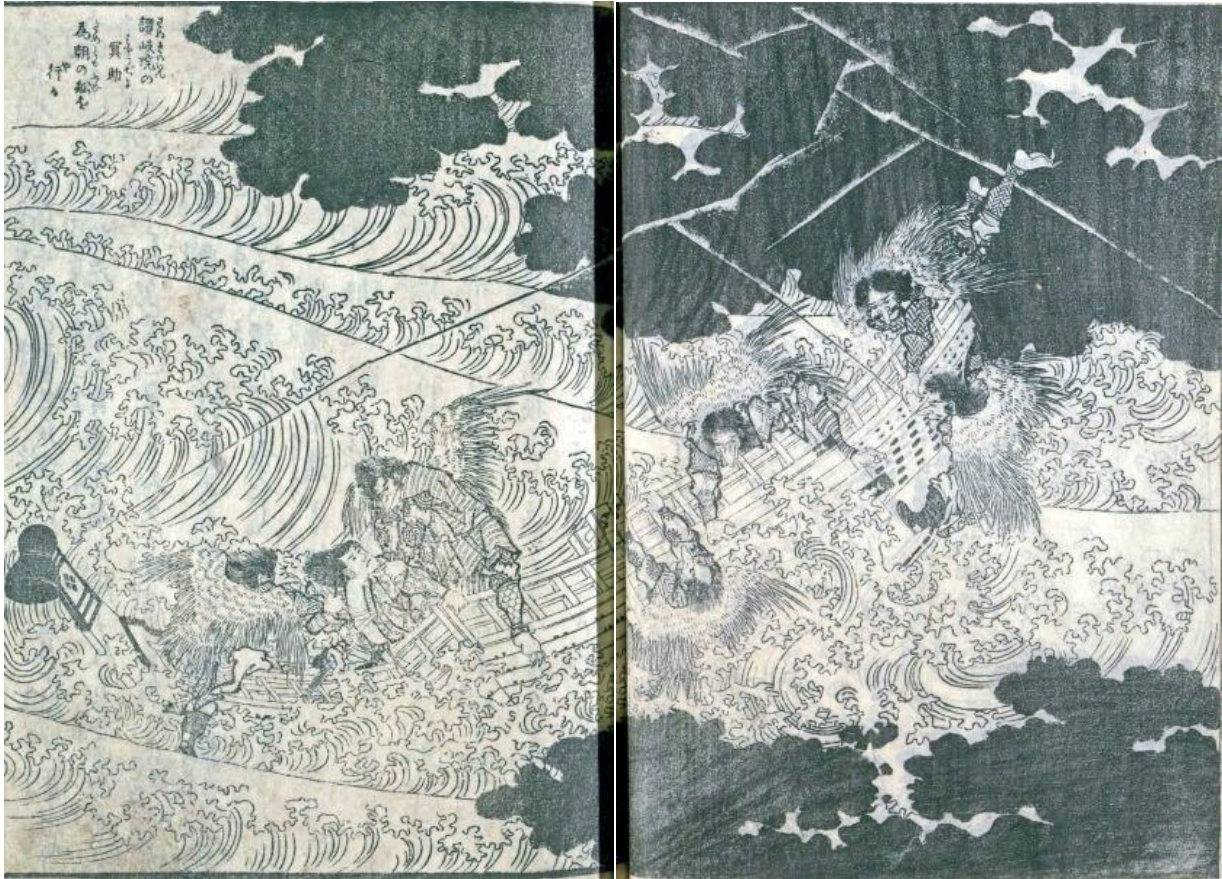
² 13 BCE-130 AD; r. 71-130 AD.

³ 72-114, son of emperor Keikō.

again be reunited, the angry spirit of the Sanuki emperor took pity on me and brought us together again, consoling the many years of melancholy. I was blessed with the child Sutemaru and have served you these seven years. My aspirations are fulfilled. I cannot now express all the pain of parting from husband and child, but at the same time there is no greater bliss than throwing my life away if that will save you and Sutemaru. I now bid you farewell.” With that she was about to jump into the waves when Tametomo quickly embraced her, trying to reason with her, “I’m grateful for your intentions, and your comparison of me with Yamato Takeru as wanderers bearing an imperial mandate is very wise. But if we are to die, we should die as a couple. Don’t do anything rash!” Wiping away her copious tears, Shiranui said, “Your words of affection are only a hindrance to death. When I was in Sanuki and met the new cloistered emperor face-to-face, he explained to me ‘your conjugal ties have already come to an end, but because of your sincere devotion, you will be reunited for a time. But you will again part. Do not think ill of me for this.’ It seems that he was referring to this day. That ought to occur to you also, so it is very unreasonable of you to prevent me. Oh great god of the Minamoto clan, Otokoyama Shō Hachiman. Oh god of Aso who are at peace in Higo province. Send winds to blow the boats with my husband, his retainers, and my son safely to port!” Intoning that prayer in an elevated voice, she pulled her sleeve out of his grasp and plunged into a wave that opened up to take her to a depth of a thousand fathoms. What a pitiful, fleeting end to her life! And yet the wind and rain did not stop. The roar of the sea was tremendous, the boats were like balls being kicked about, one moment being lifted high in the sky, and the next moment sliding down lower than the waves, not quite sinking but not quite floating. The twenty souls on Tametomo’s boat saw no gain from Shiranui’s self-sacrifice. Clinging to the gunwale, they sat up and cried, “Ever since we came to Mount Kihara we have dedicated our lives to you. Unless the wizard Qin Gao comes riding on his carp, or Liezi comes riding the winds,⁴ we cannot imagine that you will get out of this alive. Come on, men. Let us take the lead on the way to death!” Then they each took out their swords and either stabbed each other or cut their bellies open. Tumbling off the deck, they then turned into trash on the bottom of a wild, nameless sea.

Seeing not only Shiranui, but over twenty retainers fall into the waves, Tametomo sighed over and over, saying to himself, “Fate must really be on Kiyomori’s side. If I had succeeded in

⁴ Qin Gao is a Taoist immortal who is described in the *Lie xian zhuan* as riding a huge magic carp. In the “Xiaoyao you” (“Carefree Wandering”) chapter of *Zhuangzi*, Liezi is described as riding the winds.



leading to the capital these warriors, all willing to fight to the death, then we would surely have taken that scoundrel's head. But the dragon god who controls the rain and the seas has followed the world in siding with the corrupt faction of the Tairas. When fate finally has its way, there's no point in resenting either the world or its people. Fate has taken away my beloved wife, I've lost my followers who were like my arms and legs, so how much longer should I remain? I don't know what has become of Sutemaru's boat, whether or not he is still alive, though he's probably now in the belly of a great fish. To think about it, I spent all those years living in safety of bleak shores, and now that I am fated to meet my end, I see that those years were but a long path leading to my end in the boundless sea." Then as he was about to cut his belly open, a weird lightening flashed across the sky, an enormous dark cloud descended on the boat, and strange-looking goblins appeared on board. They bailed out the water, took hold of the rudder, and as they worked the boat was soon set in order and was moving swiftly. The goblins all said in unison, "We have received an imperial command from the Sanuki emperor to come here and manage the ship. Tametomo must not rashly end his life. He is a heroic warrior, and when he extends his ambitions and tries to make a name for himself, Heaven goes to great pains to

strengthen his body and make the matter known. Like the plum blossom that is a tight bud through the frost and snow of winter, but in spring as chief among flowers. Why does he not realize that himself?” Tametomo heard their voices, but felt as if it were all a dream and remained in a stupor. To find out what happens to Tametomo, you must read the next chapter.

Chapter Thirty-Two

The faithful spirit possesses a great fish and saves the child,
A wizard blows a divine breath and reverses a premature death.

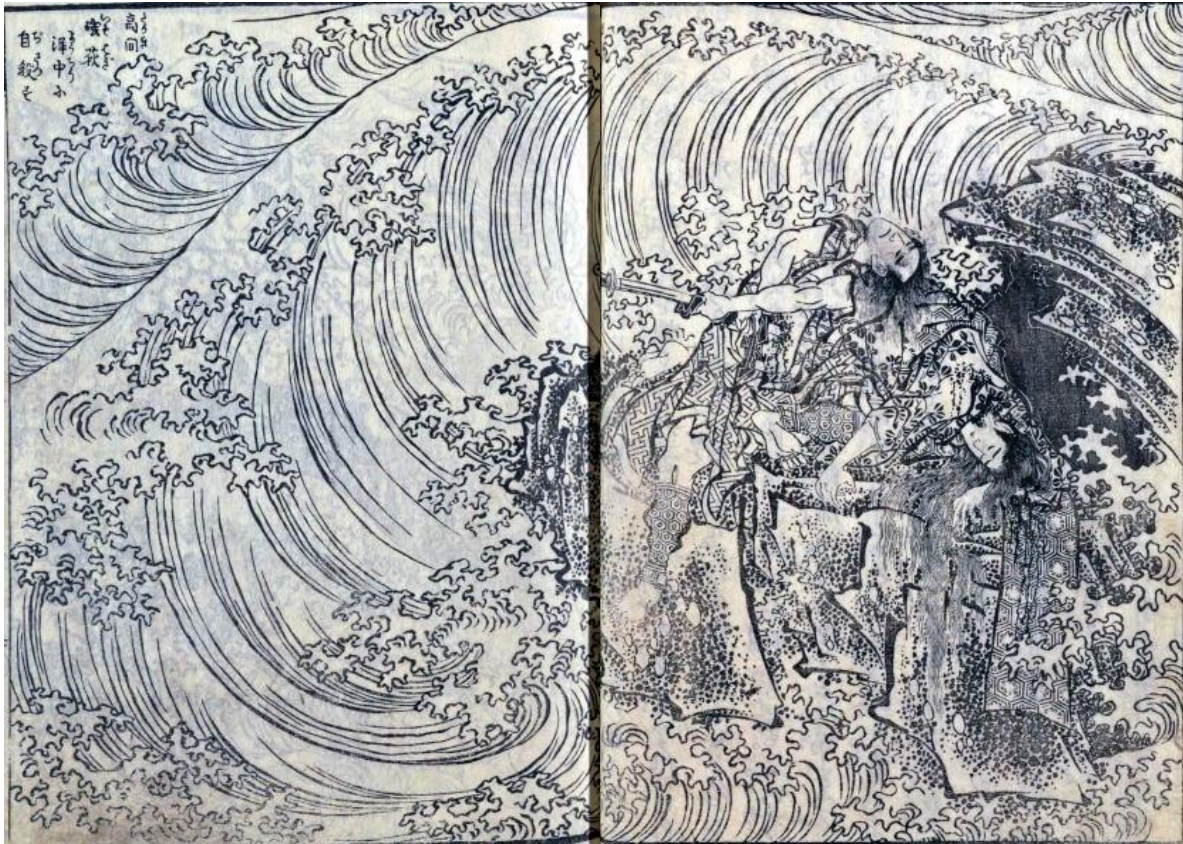
Now when the typhoon arose, Sutemaru's boat was blown away from that of his father. They had no idea where they were, and the rudder broke, leaving them more helpless than ever. Holding Sutemaru in his right arm, with his left he held a floorboard close to his side and prayed to every god and buddha for safety, including for Tametomo and Shiranui. Their fate was uncertain, but he did not have time to think about that. Takama no Tarō and Isohagi encouraged their comrades, ten or so in number and all working desperately. But the men were so exhausted that five or six of them soon died. Their afflictions allowed for no comparison. They had always been steadfastly dedicated to their lord, always willing to give up their lives, but this was not a matter of facing an enemy with a hope of leaving to future generations a reputation for valor; instead, they were pained to think that they would only end their lives in vain at the bottom of a broad expanse of water. They could not tell east from west, and if even the child were to perish, how heart-wrenching would that be? They were too weak to shout, and having collapsed, they lacked the strength to get back up. They could only wait for the ship of Buddha's grace to carry them to Paradise. Expecting the end at any moment, Kiheiji embraced Sutemaru, whose tiny hands were joined with his as together they chanted the *nenbutsu*.¹ Then with a huge thud the boat struck a rock and broke into pieces, pitching the child and his vassal into the waves, leaving them to bob up and down, as if in a cycle of birth and death in an ocean of the Eight Distresses,² two corpses clinging to each other in the wild waves, their spirits accompanying one another to the hall of the god of the sea. How pitiful! How lamentable!

Then Takama no Tarō, being the perceptive young man that he was, saw the boat break apart and, joining hands with Isohagi, sank into the waves. But a swell then unexpectedly cast them upon a rock so that their lives were spared, though there was no other boat to come to anyone's rescue. "Sutemaru has already disappeared beneath the waves, and it would be disloyal to survive him. Regretting his loss won't bring him back. If our lord's boat has not capsized and

¹ 'Hail to Amitābha Buddha' (*Namu Amida butsu*), often chanted when one faces danger or death.

² Those are birth, age, sickness death, parting with what we love, meeting with what we hate, unattained aims, and ills of the five *skandhas* (or aggregates: matter, sensations, perception, formations, and consciousness).

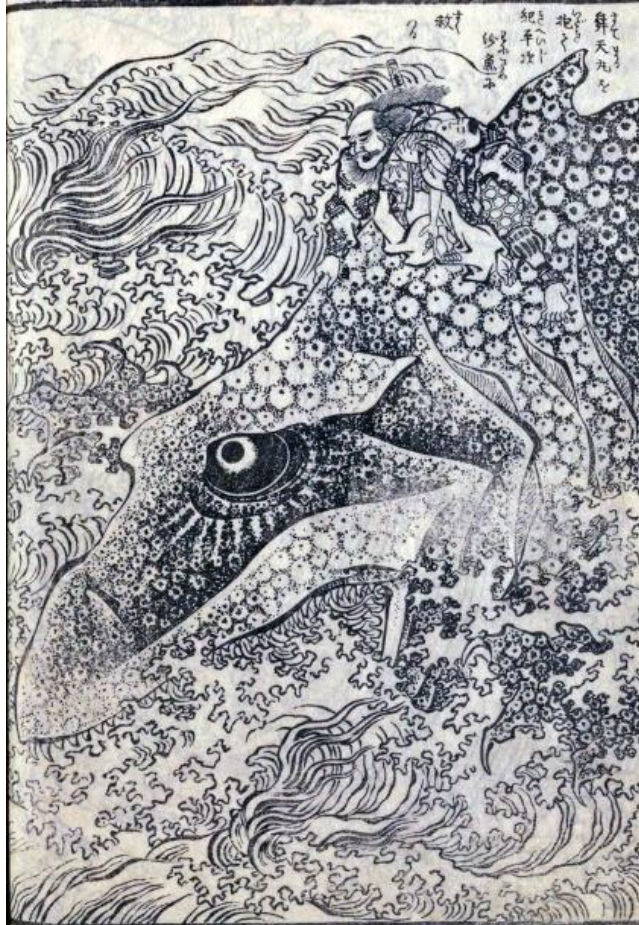
he drifts here, my spirit will follow him anywhere and protect him, even if it is to an uninhabited isle, I would take him safely ashore. Having been born in a family of warriors, it is not my desire to die of a disease, but rather than a worthless death from drowning, if you and I take our own lives together, that would give some peace of mind. Don't you think so?" Hearing her husband's weakening voice, Isohagi surmised his thoughts and, brushing the brine-sodden hair back from her forehead and painfully enunciating each word, she replied, "I am happy the we shall not break our conjugal vows, and that our firm karmic bond means that I shall come under your blade. My only regret is that we do not know what has become of Lady Shiranui, whom I have served closely all these years, or of our lord to whom we owe so much. But even more than that what weighs on my mind is the thought that after we descend to the underworld and are asked by our lord and his lady about Sutemaru, who was entrusted to us but who was swallowed by the waves, what shame it would be for us. If at least my spirit could take his remains and see that they were returned to the shore from which we departed and have the people of Mizumata properly bury him, then he could ride in the ship of *prajñā*³ to Paradise. Even we who accounted for little in this life but who have not been spared grief resolve to do our utmost to be loyal and



³ *Prajñā* (J. *hannya*), literally "wisdom," is higher consciousness that leads to enlightenment.

true to our principles. How much more is Lady Shiranui, the wife of a great commander with few peers either now or in history, a model for all women. The gods and buddhas are surely aware of that. How is it, then, that they do not save her from such calamity? Whether by miracle or by divine protection, is this an age in which such wonders no longer occur?" Giving full vent to her bitterness, she shed tears of blood as red as any coral in the eastern sea. Takama nodded in agreement, saying, "My thoughts are the same as yours. It is said that one's dying thought will determined their next life. Before we're again overcome by a wave, let us quickly catch up to our lord. No regrets, no regrets." Mutually admonishing and being admonished, Takama then put the point of his blade against Isohagi's white breast. A quick thrust was followed by a spurt of blood, after which he drew the blade across his own abdomen. Then the ever changing wind brought the crash of a wave that was dyed red, covering the bodies of the couple and carrying them away most pitifully. No one saw this sight, but it was imagined afterward, and tales of their unobserved loyalty and unremitting perseverance have been told and retold. They have been written down, and are on everyone's lips.

To turn to a different part of our story, once before in Naha harbor in the Ryukyu kingdom when Half-mile Stone-throwing Kiheiji missed boarding Tametomo's boat, though it was far off yet he was able to catch up by swimming. Since he was adept at swimming, seeing that the boat had broken apart, he jumped into the water and, holding with his left arm a floorboard for a float and with his right arm holding Sutemaru above the waves, he was able to stay afloat. As long as he was alive he could continue to swim, but on this broad expanse of sea no island was in sight. The rain continued to pour down and in the darkness he could not even find a rock on which to rest for a while. While he was bold in spirit, he was not made of steel or stone. Finally his strength gave out and his arms slackened. Just at the moment when he thought "Ah, we're going to drown," something far off in front of him appeared, glistening brightly. He was overjoyed, thinking that it might be something sent by gods or buddhas to save the child, and his strength revived. But as it drew near and he could see it better, it was a great fish more than thirty feet long, its body half out of the water. Only its eyes were glistening brightly. Kiheiji was greatly alarmed to see it, and paled at the thought that the child might end up as a meal for this creature. He had a sword at his waist, but how could he possibly kill the thing while holding the child? And even if he were able to kill it, with no other help nearby, they certainly would not survive anyway. Unable to advance or retreat, he abandoned all hope. As he was floating among



the waves the evil fish espied him and, opening its cavernous mouth rimmed with dagger-like teeth, it kicked up the water as it advanced toward him. Just then, the specters of Takama and Isohagi appeared as if in smoke, soon turning into two fox fires which seemed to enter the fish's mouth. Then strangely enough, the angry fish suddenly closed its mouth, dove under the waves, and resurfaced bearing Kiheiji on its back. It moved faster than a boat. Kiheiji was both doubtful and pleased, but concluded that the loyal spirits of Takama and Isohagi had possessed the great fish in order to save the child. Anciently in China, Han Tuizhi composed a tract reprimanding a crocodile, sending it away.⁴ Such stories are not a waste

of time after all. Thinking that Takama and Isohagi likewise deserve to be known abroad as exemplars of devotion, Kiheiji was unable to restrain tears of gratitude. At the same time, he felt anxious not knowing what had become of Tametomo.

Around dusk, the wind and waves subsided and the great fish moved quickly and smoothly over the evening wavelets. At the crack of dawn, they arrived at an unknown island, where the great fish came up to the beach and stopped. Perceiving its intention, Kiheiji got off its back and, looking back at it, said, "Oh loyal spirits of Takama and Isohagi, you did not possess this creature in vain, for your steadfast determination saved the child, and who could have done more? This was a rarer stroke of good fortune than a blind turtle encountering a floating log. Your dedication was for the benefit of the child, but this old and worthless life of mine was also spared while you two, not yet thirty years old, ended up in a watery grave under a thousand

⁴ According to a legend, a crocodile in a river by Chaozhou had been terrorizing the populace. Han Tuizhi (768-824, better known as Han Yu), a noted Confucian scholar, had been sent there as magistrate. He wrote a verdict condemning the beast and banishing it. The crocodile went away.

fathoms. But things never go as one thinks they should in this world. Though we have parted down the different paths of life and death, please rest assured that this child will be brought up properly. What I am still worried about is the fate of our lord's boat. Please observe how anxious I am about that." Seeing how Kiheiji spoke to it as if addressing those two directly—and observing the sincerity of the stalwart man's lengthy speech—the great fish sighed as if in lament, then turned about and headed toward the open sea. Two fox fires appeared above the water, and then disappeared along with the great fish.

All this time, Kiheiji had been holding Sutemaru tightly against his breast. His mind finally at ease, he sat down on a rock on the shore and said, "How are you, my little lord? Unaware of the perils we've been through, how long are you going to sleep? Wake up!" Then looking intently at the child, he became alarmed. Sutemaru was not breathing! Beside himself with panic, he shouted, but the only response was the sound of wind through the pines and of waves lapping the shore. Seeing water from the night's rain in upturned shells on the sand, he pressed some of the liquid against the child's discolored lips, but none went down his throat, and only mixed with Kiheiji's tears. Wiping them away, he said, "So then, my worthless life was the only one saved by the miracle of the great fish? How hateful you are, Takama and Isohagi! I could spend a year and three month wailing in regret, but it would be of no use to bring this child back to life. What country is this, anyway? It appears to be uninhabited, but I should at least bury the child, cut my belly open, and then carry the child across the Sanzu River and over the mountain path to the underworld.⁵ I'll carry you, so please wait for me. Now that I think about it, the master-servant bond between us was light from the beginning. If the karmic bonds connecting the three worlds⁶ and remain unchanged, then please guide us, Kṣitigarbha."⁷ Then intoning the *nenbutsu*, he looked up at the mountain on the island. The white cloud covering its peak seemed as vacuous as a dream. Was that same sun shining on his homeland? The unfamiliar trees and flowers were fragrant, birds unafraid of humans were chirping, and there was the sound of a waterfall, but no houses for him to seek.

⁵ Similar to the River Styx in Greek mythology, Sanzu is a river that departed souls must cross at one of three points: a bridge, a ford, or deep snake-infested water depending on the gravity of one's offences in life.

⁶ That is, the former life, the present life, and the next life.

⁷ Jizō in Japanese, one of the four major bodhisattvas in Mahayana Buddhism. In Japan, he is regarded as protector and patron saint of departed children.

Just then, as a wind came sweeping down from the mountain peak, Kiheiji pricked up his ears at the faint sound of sutra chanting, saying to himself, “How very strange! On a deserted beach like this, who might be performing rites, their robes dripping with brine and covered with moss? There must be a wizard’s grotto here. I’ve heard that beyond the vast sea lie ten continents where there are few traces of former human habitation, but wizards live there. They concoct elixirs of immortality, practice the true way, and live forever along with Heaven and Earth. The tale of Xu Fu setting out to find the elixir of immortality can hardly be denied.⁸ If it were not so, then there would be no Mount Potalaka where Avalokitesvara lives.⁹ We are very fortunate to have come to a land of wizards. I can make an appeal to them, and even if an elixir of revitalization does not work and the young lord’s life remains at an end, at least if he could hear about the reasoning behind karmic cause and effect, it could be a means of coming to terms with death, an aid in escaping the pains of hell and achieving rebirth in Paradise, in which case my having arrived on this island alive will have been worth it. May it be so!” Embracing the lifeless body, he made his way along the rugged, untrodden shore in the direction of the chanting, clinging to crags and tree branches, then going around a ravine full of peach blossoms he climbed upward. Surrounded by a refreshing breeze he entered a grotto covered with fragrant ground orchids and a beautifully colored mist in the air. He looked up and saw a slope reaching up to the heavens, and on it was a smooth path. Looking down, he could see the waves of the boundless ocean. He ascended it for about two miles when from out of a thicket ran a white deer, stopping right in front of him as if to guide him. Having reached this point, Kiheiji felt as if his body had suddenly become lighter, and he continued to climb to the peak where he saw an old man wearing a red hat and a robe of crane feathers seated properly atop a crag. His head was elongated but his body was short by half. His eyes were prominent, his eyebrows and beard were white, but he had a boyish face and a wizard’s stature, unlike what is usual in the world. Recognizing his divinity, Kiheiji was struck with wonder and crouched down below the crag waiting for the man to finish chanting the sutra. After some time the old man grew quiet and rolled up the scroll, whereupon Kiheiji reverentially stepped forward and bowed, saying in a loud voice, “Oh wizard, my wish is that you might restore this child to life. I beg of you, please restore him to life.” Hearing this, the old man smiled and said, “You are Half-mile Stone-

⁸ This story was introduced in chapter seventeen.

⁹ Avalokitesvara is Kannon bosatsu in Japanese. Mount Potalaka was said to be in the Indian Ocean.

throwing Kiheiji, aren't you? And isn't the child you are holding Sutemaru, the son of young master Hachirō? Come closer." His wisdom was readily apparent, and so Kiheiji respectfully related to him the details of the storm, the destruction of the boat, and their arrival on the island. Nodding, the old man said, "Haven't you heard the proverb 'He who has tasted the bitterness of distress will surely come out above others'?"¹⁰ The times for hardship or pleasure are indeterminate, and life and death are matters of fate. Looking at that child now I see that he was frightened to death when he fell into the water, but the life accorded to him is not yet finished. Saving him will be simple. Bring him here." Thanking Heaven and Earth, Kiheiji hurriedly placed Sutemaru on the lap of the old man, who took him in his arms and breathed into his mouth. Sutemaru miraculously revived and began crying. As the old man rocked him and cajoled him, he stopped crying and was his usual self.

Shedding tears of joy, Kiheiji worshipfully bowed several times to the old man, saying, "Without your benediction, this miracle could never have occurred. Sir, what kind of god are you? And what is the name of this island? Please tell me." The old man replied, "I have neither name nor pedigree. I have had a long-standing partiality for the Minamotos, and I have rendered them aid, that's all. This island is called Kowajima, and it is forty-eight leagues due west of the main island of the Ryukyu kingdom (sixty *chō* are one league, as determined in the Chinese *Zhuanxinlu*.¹¹ Even today in the Ryukyus, one league consists of sixty *chō*). Though no one has lived here since ancient times, there is coral in the sea. There are *xiantao* peaches in the mountains, and whoever eats them will not go hungry. They insure longevity. The reason there are white deer on this island is that they eat the leaves of the peaches. This Mount Kowajima is close to Mount Kome, which is a satellite island of the Ryukyu kingdom. Altogether there are thirty-six satellite islands. There are four islands in the east, the first of which is called Kudaka, and is fourteen and a half leagues from the main island. Grains produced there include red and yellow rice, and kelp is harvested from the sea. The waters around it yield lobsters and black tuna, some of which are as long as eight or nine feet. Its meat is cut up and dried. Its mountains produce many whetstones. The second island is called Tsuken, three and a half leagues east of the main island. The third is Hamashima, its north and south twin islands lying three and a half

¹⁰ This same proverb is quoted by the ghost of Sutoku in chapter twenty-five.

¹¹ Full title: *Zhongshan Zhuanxinlu* (J. *Chūzan denshinroku*), a gazetteer of the Ryukyu islands compiled in 1721 by Xu Baoguang (1671-1723). Bakin depended on it for his exhaustive description of the islands appearing in the following pages.

leagues east of the main island. The fourth is called Ikeshima, and it is also three and a half leagues east of the main island. The products of these three islands are the same as those of Kudaka. Lying to the west are three islands. The first is called Mount Bashi, which is divided into two parts. Eastern Bashi consists of five islands of varying sizes where horses, cattle, millet, and cowrie are produced. Western Bashi is made up of four islands. The people of these islands are very dark. They engage in fishing a dive deep to harvest codium seaweed in the waters beneath the mountain, making their livings that way. The codium produced in Bashi does not become discolored easily and has a very fine flavor. They also produce turbos, and there are many deer in the mountains. It is not far from Mount Kume, which is the second island, lying forty-eight leagues from the main island. The shape of the mountain is very imposing. Its produce includes the five grains, cotton, silk thread, paper, and candles. In the mountain are many chickens, pigs, cattle, and horses, while the surrounding waters abound in a black fish that likes to team near the surface and is called 'ink fish.' There are also five islands to the northwest. The first is known as Mount Tonaki. It is not far from Mount Kume, and there are many cattle there. The second is Akuni Island, and the speech there is similar to that of people on Mount Kume. Fern palms grow in greater abundance there than elsewhere, and there are many wild boars. The third is Ie Island. Mount Koishi lies between the central and norther mountains. It is surrounded by yellow sand. At high tide it is separated by five hundred or so feet of water, but at low tide one can walk between them. There are paddy fields in the mountains, and millet beans, and wheat are grown. The fourth is Mount Oe, also known as Ieya Island. It lies thirty leagues to the northwest of the main island. The rice grown there is the best, and there is also wheat, millet, foxtail millet, beans, cotton, banana fiber for spinning, sea urchins and fish. There is also a smoothly rolling mountain resembling a dragon. The fifth is called Sulfur Mountain, and is also known as Black Mountain. There are many birds there, so it is sometimes also called Bird Island. It lies thirty-five leagues to the northwest of the main island, forming north-south twin peaks with Mount Kume. There is no vegetation on the mountain, and only forty or so families live there who mine the sulfur. The people there all have sheep-like eyes and do not see clearly because of the effects of the sulfur. There is another mountain nearby known as Mount Kaisui. There are also eight islands to the northeast. The first is called Yoro, and it lies fifty leagues to the northeast of the main island. There are many banana and cryptomeria trees there. The second island is called Arabu, or sometimes Irabu and lies fifty-five leagues northeast of the main island.

The third is Takushima, sixty leagues away. The fourth is Yuro, four leagues farther to the northeast from Tokushima. The fifth is known as Uken, seventy-seven and a half leagues northeast of the main island, and the sixth is Kakeroma, at a distance of seventy-seven leagues. The seventh is called Ōshima, and it lies to the northeast of Tokushima, or eighty leagues from the main island, a three-day journey by boat. This island is thirteen leagues in length and is divided into seven administrative districts called *makiri*: West *makiri*, East *makiri*, Kasari, Nase, Yaki, Sumuyo, and Komi. The people of that island call it ‘Little Ryukyu.’ There are more than two hundred villages on it, producing rice, millet, beans, sweet potatoes, cotton, bananas, nuts, mulberry, bamboo, horses, cattle, sheep, dogs, pigs, and chickens. In the mountains are wild boars, rabbits, ducks, herons, doves, sparrows, and crows. There are also red and black hemp palms from whose fruit oil is pressed. Other fruits include sweet acorns. They also produce *shōchū* liquor and black sugar. There are three mountains on this island: Mount Seisui, Mount Kikuka, and Mount Eimei. On the north of the island is an enormous rock one league in length shaped like a round pillar. It is a hundred feet high and is called the Akase Monument. It is the place where the distant ancestor of the king stood, having descended from the heavens. No writing is inscribed on the rock, but the image of a beautiful woman has been chiseled into it. She looks as if she were alive, and is very lovely. The rock is of a glossy purple hue. There are no villages in its vicinity. (Ōshima was originally called Little Ryukyu. When Tametomo crossed over to the Ryukyu kingdom, he remained for a time on this island. Perhaps for that reason it came to be named after the Ōshima of Izu province, and thus is a later appellation.) The eighth island is called Kikai. It is ninety leagues from the main island, and is the northeast extremity of the Ryukyus. The people on this island do not use chopsticks, but eat with their hands. (It was to this island that Shunkan¹² was banished.) The lumber produced there is of high quality, lasting many years without being worm-eaten and having a mirror-like luster. There are also the seven islands of Tokari. These do not belong to the Ryukyu kingdom. There are also seven island to the south of the main island. The first of these is called Mount Taihei. It was originally called Miyako, then Meko, and was finally corrupted to Mount Mako. It lies two hundred leagues south of the main island. There is a very tall mountain on it called Mount Chiku, and on its pinnacle is the Heio Pavilion. The circumference of the mountain is five or six leagues. They also produce

¹² Shunkan (1143-1179) was a Japanese monk who was exiled to Kikai Island for taking part in a plot to overthrow Kiyomori.



cotton, flax, and straw mats. A red liquor is also brewed there called Taihei wine. The second island is Ikema, southeast of Mount Taihei. The third is Irabu, southwest of Mount Taihei. The fourth is Kurema, due west of Mount Taihei. The fifth is Tarama, also due west of Mount Taihei. The sixth is Mitsuna, southwest of Mount Taihei. The seventh is Ukami, northwest of Mount Taihei. The people generally refer to all seven of these as 'Mount Taihei.' There are another nine islands in the southwest. The first is Mount Yae, also known as Mount Ishikaki. It lies four leagues southwest of Mount Taihei, two hundred and forty leagues from the main island. Such trees as black and red pine grow there. They produce straw mats, horses, cattle whetstones, flax, cotton cloth, and sea cucumbers. They also brew a red liquor called *mitsurin* wine. The five grains grow there, and there are many precious gemstones. The second island is Uhama, southwest of Mount Yae. The third is Hatoma, also southwest of Mount Yae. The fourth is Yonakuni, also southwest of Mount Yae. The fifth is Kumi, due west of Mount Yae. Compared to the seven islands other than Mount Yae or Uhama, it is rather large. The sixth is Taketomi, due west of Mount Yae and east of Kumi. The seventh is Kuroshima, slightly northwest of Mount

Yae. The eighth is Arakusuku, west of Mount Yae. And the ninth is Hateruma, to the northwest of Mount Yae. The people generally refer to all of these as 'Mount Yae.' And so the Ryukyu kingdom includes these thirty-six satellite islands, but since travel among them is not easy, there are few detailed accounts of them. So commit this to memory and do not forget it. It will be of use to you later. This child has been separated from his parents at a tender age and has ended up on this lone island, but in another thirteen or fourteen years he will meet with unanticipated good fortune and will achieve great things. You are to raise him and educate him until such a time. Though the five grains do not grow on this island, there are peaches in the mountains, ripening throughout the year. They will stave off your hunger and also extend your lifespan. That will become your custom. As the saying goes, 'Character depends more on upbringing than on lineage.' Whether one is wise or foolish is determined by education or lack of it. From now on it will be your duty to train this child in the martial arts and in reading and writing. I have here a volume on tactics from Hachiman Tarō Yoshiie, based on a secret transmission from Lord Enosotsu Masafusa.¹³ It is the most prized possession of the Minamoto family. During the Heiji uprising, Yoshitomo had it in his breast pocket when he escaped to Owari. After he was killed by Osada, this book fell into the hands of commoners, but when I was passing through that area I was able to purchase it. It should belong to Sutemaru. If you go into a ravine south of this mountain, you'll find an ancient peach tree. On a branch that extends to the east something will be hanging. Cut that branch off and make three arrows of it. Call the first 'Grand Shrine of Ise.' Call the second 'Otokoyama Shō Hachiman.' And call the third 'Aso Myōjin.' If both of you hold these in memory night and day, they will vanquish poison dragons and evil demons, and will be things of marvelous efficacy. That is because the peach is a miraculous tree that can subdue the hundred evils. Anciently in China during the reign of the Yellow Emperor,¹⁴ there were two brothers, Shentu and Yulei, who were good at capturing demons. The Yellow Emperor had placards made from peach wood, and had the image of these two brothers painted on them. When these are hung at a gatepost or entry, they keep evil demons away. And during the Han dynasty, the Queen Mother of the West¹⁵ presented to Emperor Wu a peach that ripens only once every three thousand years. There are other tales of peaches, too numerous to cite. Thus, there

¹³ Ōe no Masafusa (1041-1111).

¹⁴ A mythical emperor whose reign dates are said to be 2697/8-2597/8 BCE.

¹⁵ A mother goddess appearing in Chinese mythology. She was said to have met with Emperor Wu (156-87 BCE), granting him special teachings which he failed to keep and thus died.

could not be anything better for keeping the two of you alive. I shall give this island to Sutemaru and move elsewhere. Though we part now, we shall meet again someday. If you doubt these things, you will neglect them, and if you neglect them, nothing will come of it. Be diligent.” With that he concluded his declamation and handed the book on tactics to Sutemaru. Embracing the boy and delirious with joy, Kiheiji said, “How could I ever forget your instruction? The only thing that still weighs on me is the fate of Tametomo and Shiranui. Please tell me what has become of them.” The old man replied, “If I were to tell you, it would be like breaking your resolve. There will come a time when you will know for yourself. I do not want you to ask about it.” When Kiheiji was about to press him further, the old man suddenly stood up and waved his sleeve, whereupon a white cloud towered up from beneath the crag, enveloping the old man who ascended into midair and was then swept away by the wind.

In ever greater awe, for some time Kiheiji bowed down to the ground in reverence. Finally, leading Sutemaru he went to the eastern ravine where he indeed found the grove of peach trees. They were hungry, so he picked two and gave one to Sutemaru. The peaches were very sweet, and eating only one each left them satisfied and possessing far more energy than was usual. As they looked here and there for the ancient tree the old man had mentioned, they found a golden tag tied to one old tree along with five or six bird feathers. Inscribed on the tag was: “Released by Minamoto Yoshiie on the tenth day of the third month, Kōhei 6 [1063].” Half understanding, half in doubt, Kiheiji quickly took the tag and, holding it reverentially above his head, said, “Young master, look at this! They say that long ago, at the conclusion of nine years of warfare, Lord Yoshiie released a great number of cranes as a memorial to the fallen. There can be no doubt that this tag is proof. Ever since your father Lord Hachirō spared the life of a crane on Mount Yū,¹⁶ it has often shown miraculous powers, and when you were born, a white crane flew down to the roof of the house.¹⁷ The crane is a divine creature, a saint among birds. They assume their final form only when they are one thousand six hundred years old. The white ones are like snow, the black ones like lacquer. A proverb says that ‘Cranes are the steeds of wizards.’ Their miraculous powers become apparent when they are eight hundred years old, and at a thousand their powers of transformation are limitless. Adding all of these things together, I wonder if that old man was not a transformation of that same crane that Lord Hachiman released, and that this

¹⁶ This episode is described in chapter three.

¹⁷ This is described in chapter twenty-eight.

announces the regeneration of your father. And was it the wizard Fukurokuju who rode this crane through the skies? It's difficult to know for sure, but all of this shows that your father's virtues were not cultivated in vain, but have been rewarded here. What is there to mourn about now? In the end, you'll meet your father and mother." Sutemaru showed an understanding of those words of consolation, bespeaking a maturity beyond his age. Rather than a young child being consoled so that he would not yearn for his parents, he hid his inconsolable tears among the rain and drops from the treetops. Kiheiji cut the branch off and, using the bird feathers, fashioned arrows using deer horns for arrowheads and the golden tag for an offering. Dedicating them to the three shrines, he set them up in the hollow of the old tree and paid reverence to them there. He considered it his duty to train Sutemaru in the martial arts, bending bamboo into a bow. Fashioning a bridle out of tree bark, he taught the boy how to shoot arrows while riding wild horses. He also taught him how to read and write by drawing characters in the sand. Blessed with matchless intelligence, by the time Sutemaru was ten years old he exceeded Kiheiji in all accomplishments. He memorized the book on tactics and came up with many ideas to expand on it. And so, during the six or seven years the two of them spent on Kowashima, they made their clothing of deer hides, made their bedding of bird feathers, slept in caves at night, and spent their days on the beach befriending plovers. Every morning when he saw the sun rise out of the sea and yearned for his home, Sutemaru would pay reverence to the three arrows and pray that he might one day be reunited with his parents. He depended on his retainer, Kiheiji, for support, and his retainer spared no efforts to raise and train him. How difficult it must have been for them.

From this point on, the story shifts to the Ryukyu kingdom and the matter of succession involving Lady Ren and Princess Nei. Because of slander by the queen [*chūfugimi*], the princess is abandoned together with Lady Ren at the foot of Mount Kyūkyū, where unexpectedly they trade a crane for the gem that was in Tametomo's possession.

Tametomo took the crane back to Japan and the princess took the gem to the castle. All of this is described in detail in [chapter six] in the third fascicle of the preceding volume. Princess Nei gave yams to Tametomo and told of her sorrows. The reader should consult this section.

This chapter includes the history of the Ryukyu kingdom from its beginning down to the twenty-fifth generation of the Tenson household [*Tensonshi*], the eighteenth year of the reign of King Shō Nei¹ (according to the pedigree in *Zhongshan Zhuanxinlu*, the son of King Shō Ei, the twenty-fourth generation from Shunten,² was also called Shō Nei, but he is not the same one. Do not confuse these.)

In Japan, it was the second year of Kyūju [1155], during the reign of Emperor Konoe.³ Seventeen year-old Tametomo had become the son-in-law of Tadakuni in Aso, and was destined to bring all of Kyushu under his control. The conclusion of the preceding volume marks the end of our story in Japan, and with this volume we shall resume the account of events in Ryukyu, and it may give the impression that the chronology is out of order. We beg the reader's indulgence. In what follows, we shall adhere to this precedent.

Chapter Thirty-Three

Mō Kokutei confutes Ri Yū,

The deities of Kinmanmon appear at the palace.

The beginning of the Ryukyu kingdom coincides with the beginning of Heaven and Earth, when a man and a woman were spontaneously generated and became a couple. She was called Amamiku⁴ (so it is recorded in both *Zhuanxinlu* and *Chūzan seikan*). In one account, his family name was Kanshishi and his given name was Katsushitō, or Kōratotsu, but the people call him Karōnen and his spouse Tabatto, or Tohato. According to yet another account, the husband was called Shinerikyu and the wife was Amamikyu. This leaves the pedigree of the king uncertain according to *Ryūkyū-koku jiryaku*.⁵ That couple had three sons and two daughters, and the eldest son was Tenson, who became the first king. The second son became the ancestor of lords, and the third son the ancestor of the peasantry. The first daughter was named Kunkun, and the second daughter Shukushuku. One became the goddess of Heaven, and the other the goddess of the Sea. (According to *Jiryaku*, the eldest daughter because the ancestress of noble ladies

¹ 1564-1620; r. 1587-1620), first king of Ryukyu to be a vassal to the Shimazu clan of Satsuma. He was the adopted son-in-law of King Shō Ei (1559-1588; r. 1573-1588). For the apparent anachronism, see Bakin's interpolated note.

² Shunten (1166-1237; r. 1187-1237), legendary first ruler of Ryukyu.

³ 1139-1155; r. 1142-1155. The context does not make clear which event in the narrative this date refers to.

⁴ More commonly known as Amamikyu, the creation goddess in the ancient Ryukyuan religion

⁵ A work by Arai Hakuseki (1657-1725).

while the second daughter became the ancestress of ladies in waiting.) When Heaven and Earth were divided, the island was small and was floating on the waves. So they planted a tree called *tashika* which grew into the shape of a mountain, and an herb called *shikyū* as well as a tree called *atan*, which grew into the shape of the land. Since there was not yet fire, they acquired some from the Dragon Palace, thus assembling all of the Five Elements.⁶ From ancient times in Japan the land was called Ryukyu, or Uruma Island. In the *Senzaishū* we read:

Obotsuka na Uruma no shima no hito nare ya waga koto no ha o shirazugao naru

How unsettling! Might you be from the isle of Uruma,
as if you don't understand the words I sent?⁷

Daini no Sanmi's *Sagoromo monogatari*⁸ also mentions Uruma Island, and *Shitahimo*⁹ clarifies this where it notes that "Uruma Island is Ryukyu." Also, *Honchō kaidan koji*,¹⁰ citing *Ryūkyū shintōki*,¹¹ says, "It is written that the royal palace in the Ryukyu kingdom is modeled on the Dragon Palace. Considering this, I [Taichū] think that 'Ryukyu' means 'Ryūgū' [Dragon Palace], because they are nearly homophonous. Southeast of the kingdom there is a deep depression under the sea, and perhaps that is because it is the Dragon Palace. There is a shrine dedicated to the Dragon of Heavens and Earth, called Queen of Heaven [*Tenhai*]. (*Tenhai* is a Chinese goddess, who has great power to protect boats as they cross the sea.) It is what people now in other countries call a bodhisattva, but here it is a god of shipping." Thus, what people call "Dragon Palace" in our country is the same as Ryukyu.

But setting aside such digressions, the twenty-fifth monarch in the Tenson dynasty of the Ryukyu kingdom was King Shō Nei. It was a time when the virtuous character of the monarchy was in decline and the country was on the brink of failure. In investigating the course of events, we find that King Shō Nei possessed little talent and was lacking in prudence. His queen, the *chūfugimi*, was lascivious and full of envy and, together with the flatterer Ri Yū, seized power

⁶ That is wood, fire, earth, metal, and water.

⁷ By Fujiwara no Kintō (966-1041), no 659 in the *Senzaishū*. The headnote to this verse is: "It was a when someone from Uruma Island was released here, and was unable to understand what was said. I wrote to a woman who would not respond to my poems ..."

⁸ A late Heian work of fiction traditionally attributed to Murasaki Shikibu's daughter Daini no Sanmi (1000-1082), but now the dominant theory is that it was written by Rokujō Saiin no Senju (d. 1092), the daughter of Minamoto no Yorikuni (d. 1038).

⁹ *Sagoromo shitahimo*, a commentary on *Sagoromo monogatari* by Satomura Jōha (1527-1602).

¹⁰ A collection of ghost stories and strange happenings, published in four volumes in 1716.

¹¹ By the Jōdo priest Taichū Ryōtei (1552-1639) who lived in Naha from 1603 to 1606. Published in five volumes in 1648, it provides the first account of Tametomo's travel to Ryukyu, and of Shunten being his son.

and controlled the government as they pleased. At first, King Shō Nei was about to install the daughter of Lord Shiba Juntoku as his consort, but due to certain circumstances he abandoned that plan and instead installed the daughter of Minister of State Ri Sha as *chūfugimi* (in Ryukyu, the queen is called *chūfugimi*), while making Juntoku's daughter *heihi* (*heihi* is a concubine, second to the queen). This is Lady Ren, whom we saw in [chapter six] in the third fascicle. Now the *chūfugimi* excelled in both beauty and talent, exercising the coquetry of Fei Yan and Queen Jia.¹² The king became infatuated with her charm, letting her have her way in all matters both foreign and domestic. Not only that, but the Minister of State had recently passed away, and his nephew, the Regional Officer Ri Yū, took complete control of the government, making a mockery of the sovereign and oppressing the populace. His arrogance went to such extremes that twenty-five generations of Tenson rule—more than 17,800 years of benevolent reign—was suddenly cast aside, counter to the needs of the people. There was no heir to the throne, but Lady Ren conceived and gave birth to a princess. King Shō Nei was almost forty years old at the time, and was very pleased at the birth of his first child. He named her Princess Nei and lavished her with all affection. In the traditional succession of Tenson rulers, when there was no prince, a princess would ascend the throne. Now the *chūfugimi* was consumed with envy as she pondered her future course, but Lady Ren was at all times discreet, never vying for the favor of the King or showing any shred of conceit, but remaining modest in her bearing and respectful toward the *chūfugimi*. Although she secretly despised the queen, she did not let it show in her countenance and just held her tongue. As Princess Nei grew up, she not only turned out to be exceptionally beautiful, but was a model of both filial piety and a wisdom surpassing that of most men. Thus, King Shō Nei lavished ever more affection on her, intending to appoint her as heir to the throne. Princess Nei soon reached her fourteenth year.

Now the kingdom of Ryukyu is very small, only forty or so leagues from east to west.¹³ Its capital is called Shuri, and its geographical divisions are known as *magiri*, each governed by an officer called a Lord [*anzu*]. There are nine ranks of officials, each rank further divided into senior and junior. The Minister of State and the Grand Marquis [*genkō*] are both of the senior first rank, while the Minister of Law [*hōzu*] is of the senior second rank. Regional Officers

¹² Zhao Feiyan (32-1 BCE), formally Empress Xiaocheng, was consort to Emperor Cheng (57-17 BCE; r. 33-17 BCE). Jia Nanfeng (257-300) was consort to Emperor Hui (259-307; r. 290-307).

¹³ This is speaking, of course, only of the main island.

[*shikinkan*] are of the junior second rank. These three offices all belong to the ministry, and are collectively known as the Council of Three [*sanshikan*], or as Overseers [*oyakata*] of their respective districts. Intelligence Officers [*jimokukan*] (also called *gyosasoku*) are of the senior third rank, while Herald's [*etsusha*] (also called *mōshitsugi*) are of the junior third rank. Councilors [*sangikan*] are of the senior fourth rank, while Naha city officials are of the junior fourth rank. Officials overseeing festivals [*sajikikan*] are also of the junior fourth rank, while Officers of the Exchequer [*atarikan*] are of the senior fifth rank. Appeals Officers [*segamikan*] are of the senior sixth rank, while Captains [*haikin*] are of the senior seventh rank. Assistant Captains [*teihaikin*] are of the junior seventh rank, while Senior Pages [*satonoshi*] are of the senior eighth rank. Assistants to Senior Pages [*satonoshi no suke*] are of the junior eighth rank, while Junior Pages [*chikutoshi*] are of the senior ninth rank. Their assistants are of the junior ninth rank. There are many other offices, too numerous to list.

One day, King Shō Nei assembled all of the courtiers and officials in the Main Hall of the Dragon Palace and proposed designating Princess Nei as his successor, giving her the two dragon gems, and having both her and Lady Ren moved to the section of the Middle Castle reserved for the heir. Everyone replied, “Your majesty’s age is approaching half a century, but there is no



prince. And yet the Princess is filial, obedient, and exceptionally intelligent. It would fulfill the hopes of the people to have her accede to the throne, and would be a good fortune for the country. The Middle Castle *magiri* has traditionally included a domain for the prince, and the heir has always occupied it, so it is known as the Middle Castle Hall. Judged by the stars, today is an auspicious day for the nobility. Please act on this quickly.” Hearing these words of felicitation, King Shō Nei was greatly pleased and had the Senior Pages go to meet the *chūfugimi*, Princess Nei, and Lady Ren. Explaining the matter to them, he reverentially brought the box containing the gems and was about to present it to the princess when the *chūfugimi*, greatly alarmed, exchanged glances with the Regional Officer Ri Yū, who hurriedly came forth and said, “Your majesty, please give ear to my humble words. Since the Tenson family founded this country seventeen thousand eight hundred years have passed and there have been twenty-five generations of rulers. Although princesses have ascended to the throne in the absence of princes, all such cases were in ancient times, none of them recent. That is the first thing. Your majesty is almost fifty years of age, but you are in good health, and moreover the *chūfugimi* is not much past thirty. Most men maintain their virility until sixty-four, and most women remain fertile until forty-nine. Therefore you are not too old to have children, and it is impossible to say that a prince will not henceforth be born. That is the second thing. The Princess is indeed intelligent by nature, but in a womanly way. As the proverb says, ‘Better the silence of a doltish man than the garrulousness of a clever woman.’ A hundred years from now if the Princess is ruling this country, the ministers will simply have their way about everything and the dignity of the throne will be diminished. That is the third thing. Considering these three adverse factors, your decision could determine good or ill fortune. Determining a successor is a matter of great national concern, and the very survival of our land depends on it. Please, give it very careful deliberation.” Everyone was struck with awe at the authoritativeness of his eloquent speech, exchanging glances but remaining silent. King Shō Nei suddenly seemed hesitant, and after some reflection asked, “In that case, what should I do?” Ri Yū replied, “In my humble opinion, It is still early to determine a successor. If a prince is not born, then the long-term plan should be to take a minister of virtuous character as your son-in-law and yield the affairs of state to him. Please abandon the plan you had for today.” He spoke as if unconscious of those around him. But then someone from the left row stepped forward and said, “Your majesty, please do not be led astray by Ri Yū’s clever words and turn to error in this important matter of the state.” Everyone

turned and looked at him in surprise. He was about thirty years of age, of fair complexion and with prominent brows. His eyes were like those of a phoenix, his lips crimson, and his voice as strong as a large temple bell. On his head were a golden hair ornament and a court cap of purple damask. He wore a deep blue robe with a coiled dragon design and a yellow sash. This was the son of the former Minister of State Mō, nephew of the Minister Shiba Juntoku, Lord of the Middle Castle Mō Kokutei. With his forehead pressed to the ground, Mō Kokutei said, “Ri Yū raised these arguments in opposition to your majesty’s determining an heir at this time. They may appear reasonable, but in reality are not. To say that there are no recent examples of a princess being elevated to the throne in the absence of a prince and then abandon the plan to do so would be to reject the good governance of the ancients and to deviate from the laws of former kings, would it not? This is the first thing. Then not deciding matter now but rather sitting on the fence waiting for a prince to be born is as uncertain as the albatross that doesn’t fish but waits for a bird of prey to drop a morsel. If a prince is born after the princess is installed in the Middle Castle, she could then later yield the throne to her younger brother. Could any other plan provide a better foundation for the continued well-being of the land? This is the second thing. A custom of our land has been that all girls, whether of high or low estate, at the age of fifteen would have a dragon design tattooed on their heads. Though some grumbled that it was a foolish old custom, yet since it was the law of the land, there was nothing they could do about it. In the spring of her twelfth year, the Princess greatly dreaded this and, making obeisance to the gods of Heaven and Earth, implored that this custom might end. Hearing of this, the king forbade tattooing of the head, instead teaching them only to ink a line down the fingers as far as the cuticle, replacing the dragon design. Everyone, both wise and foolish, was pleased by this and praised the virtue of the Princess. This shows that her mind is quite sufficient to be a parent to the people. This is the third thing. Though no one among the ministers would deny these three auspicious factors, will your majesty hesitate because of what Ri Yū said?” He was bold in his admonition and his directness defied contradiction. At a loss for words, Ri Yū remained silent. Hearing this line of reasoning, King Shō Nei had a change of heart and, saying “Verily, that is so,” again took up the box containing the gems and faced the Princess, thoroughly explaining to her, “When our Tenson ancestors founded this country, they slew an evil dragon and save the people from harm. When they cut open its jaw, they found two gems inside. They named one of them *ryū* and the other *kyū*. I have heard that in China a sovereign seal is used in imperial succession. And also in Yamato

(even now the people of Ryukyu refer to our land as Yamato out of respect. Many of our ancient words are preserved there) there are the three sacred imperial treasures that have been passed down through each reign. These gems of ours are the same kind of thing, and are very precious divine jewels. I now entrust these to your keeping. Henceforth, you and Lady Ren will occupy the Middle Castle Hall.” Then handing the gems to the Princess, he summoned Mō Kokutei to come closer and said, “Since you are Lord of that hall, from this day hence you are to serve the Princess. Instruct her and guide her.” Greatly pleased, Mō Kokutei humbly accepted, saying, “As your majesty wishes. It is truly the good fortune of our country that your majesty has accepted my humble words.” Everyone shouted “Banzai.” Only Ri Yū, with a sour look on his face, looked at the *chūfugimi* and muttered, “The King did not accept my admonition. We’ll have to think of another plan later.”

Thus an auspicious day was selected for Princess Nei, who took the gems and together with Lady Ren moved into the Middle Castle Hall. Ministers of culture and ministers of war as well as ladies in waiting came to attend to the new heir apparent. Mō Kokutei came every day to instruct her how to maintain order in the kingdom and about the relative interests of sovereign and subject. The Princess became even more self-disciplined, and was discreet in all her actions. And so King Shō Nei frequented the Middle Castle spending entire days there, pleased that the Princess did not neglect her filial devotion. The *chūfugimi* was increasingly indignant, but did not let it show. She secretly colluded with Ri Yū, and decided that they should first get Lady Ren out of the way. They racked their minds for a way to get rid of the Princess but could not come up with a plan. But beginning with the following spring, the gods of the seas and mountains appeared, creating havoc in the waters and on land so that those who depended on fishing and farming lost their livelihoods. This was seen as the wrath of Kinmanmon,¹⁴ and people in each *magiri* made pilgrimages to the sacred places and groves around the country, playing flutes and beating drums to pacify her, but to no effect.

There are four sacred places in the kingdom of Ryukyu. The first is the Gem Castle [*tama kusuku*] in Sannan province (one and a half leagues south of the royal palace [*shuri*]). It was here that first Tenson ruler split the dragon’s jawbone and retrieved the gems, and hence it is called Gem Castle. The second is Toyomi Castle in Sannan province. Here there is an altar to pray for rain, an oration made yearly by the king. The third is in the North Ravine in Sannan province,

¹⁴ A deity in Ryukyuan Shinto.

close to the sea, where the first Tenson ruler slew the dragon. The fourth is a tall peak named Mount Kyūkyū in Chūzan province, where the first Tenson ruler buried the bones of the dragon. There is a mound there called Mizuchi Mound. Both Gem Castle and Toyomi Castle lie to the south of the royal palace, while Mount Kyūkyū is in the southwest. None of these three are more than three or four leagues away from each other. Collectively, all of these are referred to as the Four Sacred Sites. Throughout the kingdom of Ryukyu, great trees and crags by the wayside are all worshiped as gods, but Kinmanmon is especially revered, because from the founding of the country she was regarded as its protectress. She has both *yin* and *yang* aspects. That descending from heaven is called *kiraiganai no Kinmanmon* and that arising from the sea is called *ōtsukakeraku no Kinmanmon*. She sometimes appears through the oracles of shamanesses and in various sacred groves. Those thirty-three shamanesses are all attached to the royal household, and the queen is one of them. This is similar to the ancient practice in Japan of having a royal princess serve at the Ise Grand Shrine. Aside from those thirty-three, there are innumerable shamanesses throughout the kingdom. There is also a goddess called Nyoō, and sisters of the

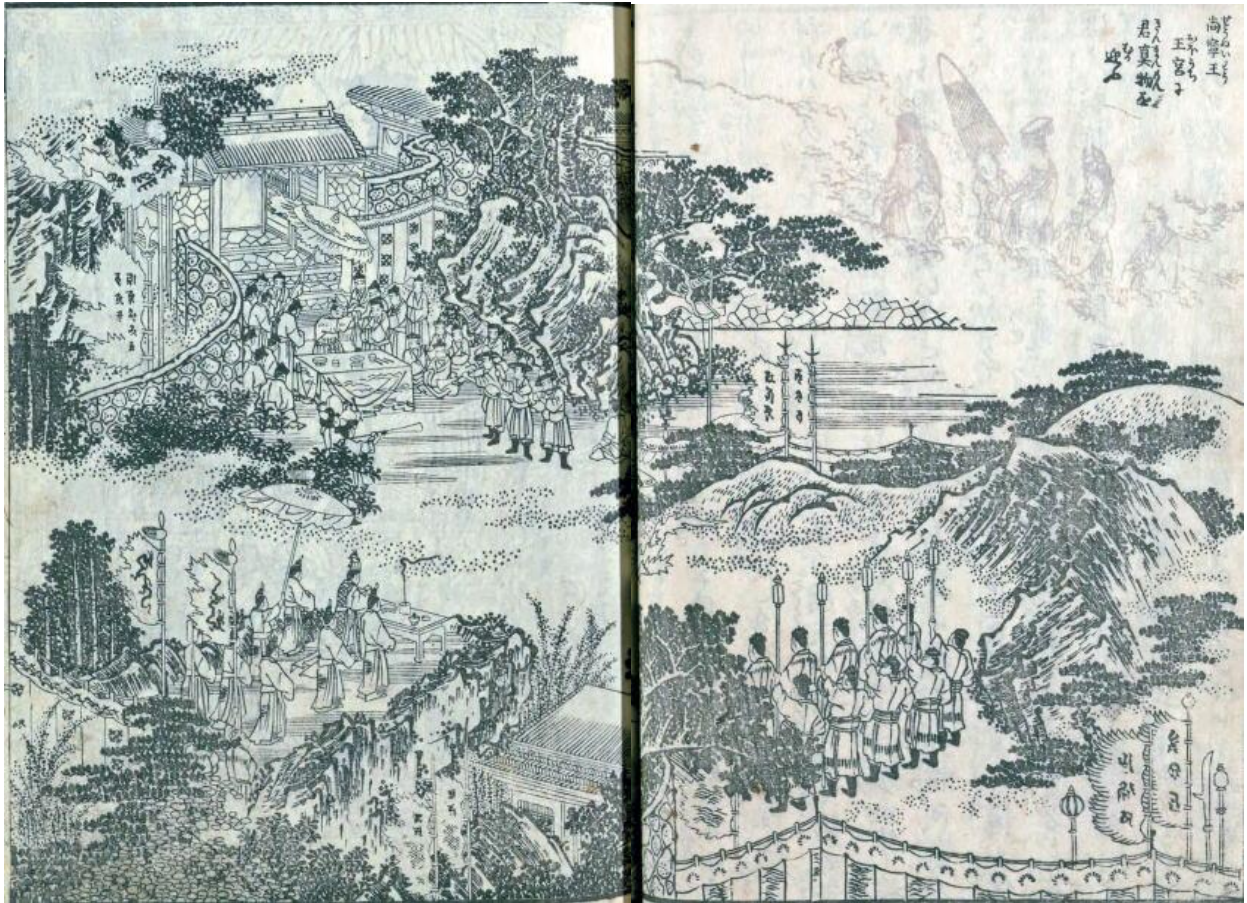


king act as mouthpiece for this deity. When the five grains ripen, her shamaness travels throughout the land tasting of the first harvest. Anyone who eats of the harvest before Nyoō has tasted of it will die on the spot. Thus, there is no one who steals from unharvested fields. These things are recorded in detail in Xia Ziyang's *Shi lu*¹⁵ and in Xie Zhaozhi's *Wuzazu*.¹⁶ When Kinmanmon is angered the people of the land would practice austerities to purify themselves and pay obeisance to her in order to pacify her. And once every seven or twelve years, a wild deity will appear, wreaking havoc not only on the

¹⁵ Xia Ziyang (1522-1710), an envoy to Ryukyu, recorded his findings in *Shi Liuqiu lu*.

¹⁶ Xie Zhaozhi (1567-1624) is best known for his miscellany *Wuzazu*.

main island but on all thirty-six satellite islands. This is called *kimitesuri*, and everyone from the king on down to the lowliest subject pays homage to the god. In the eighth or ninth month of the year just before this deity appears, there emerges an *aori*, which is a bright five-colored trail of mist above the three peaks, as if covering them completely. Accordingly, they are called *aori* peaks, and when they see that sign, they know to expect the wild deity by the tenth month. Then the shamanesses and all in the court beat drums, sing songs, and erect thirty umbrellas in the



courtyard of the palace to provide the deity with temporary lodging. The umbrellas are of varying sizes, the large ones being seventy or eighty feet tall with a span of ten armlengths, while the small ones are ten or twenty feet tall with spans of corresponding size. Sometimes mountain gods also make an appearance, either in large or small numbers depending on the year. When people have seen the mountain god, his countenance is hazy and indistinct, but he is attired in long-sleeved robes that can change in an instant from something like brocade to something like linen. He is attended by two boys named Jirō and Gorō. Their robes are the same as those made in Japan, short-sleeved with *hakama*. If the mountain god is angry and whips the boys, they howl

like dogs. Sometimes a god of the sea named Ōchikyū (or Fūnakyū) appears. This god is ten feet tall and has such enormous testicles that he straps his loincloth over his shoulders. These gods are often collectively called Kinmanmon. This is not just the stuff of idle tales; a Japanese priest actually saw them once when he was in that country. These things are recorded in the “Ryūkyū jiryaku” chapter of *Kottōroku*,¹⁷ and in *Wuzazu*, Xie Zaihang [Zhaozhi] writes, “When a [certain] Chinese person reached Ryukyu, the person who was cooking for him saw a god before his very eyes. Its voice was like the buzzing of mosquitoes.”

Though many mysterious things had happened in the past, the five grains had never been damaged nor the people harmed, but this year the mountain god and Ōchikyū were raging in their fury. The people lost their livelihoods from both sea and land, and both woodcutters and fishermen were bewailing their lots. Hearing of this, the *chūfugimi* was rather quite pleased and, colluding with Ri Yū, sent trusted retainers to all of the *magiri* with the message, “The King and his ministers would not give heed to warnings but went ahead and installed Princess Nei in the Middle Castle as the heir apparent, and for that reason Kinmanmon is angered and has brought about this calamity.” And just as when one dog howls the whole pack starts howling, this rumor grew in volume until it filled the streets. When it reached the ears of King Shō Nei, he was alarmed and immediately summoned the Lord of the Middle Castle, Mō Kokutei, to inquire about the matter, saying, “I am very uneasy about these claims. What do you think about it?” Mō Kokutei replied, “How could there be any truth to it? These rumors must be a plot to denigrate the Princess. Ever since she was installed in the Middle Castle she has become all the more discreet in her actions and has been faultless in every respect. There could be no reason for the gods to punish her. Please, do not give such reports any credence.” King Shō Nei furrowed his brow, saying, “That may be so, but the people have been performing exorcisms at Toyomi Castle and rites of pacification at various sacred groves, and I myself have offered orations in the palace. I have also gone to the Northern Ravine to make offerings to the sea god, as well as to the Mizuchi Mound on Mount Kyūkyū, but none of those things have been to any effect. There must be a reason for that. Withdraw for now. I wish to give the matter more thought.” Mō Kokutei again applied every argument to explain that the Princess could not possibly be the object of divine displeasure, but finally withdrew to the Middle Castle. Having eavesdropped on all of this, the *chūfugimi* raised her blinds and laughed scornfully at the retreating figure of Mō

¹⁷ A miscellany compiled by the Rinzai priest Takuan (1573-1645).

Kokutei, ridiculing him and saying, “Does your majesty not yet understand? Mō Kokutei is Lady Ren’s cousin, and so he is scheming to have the Princess rule the land so that he can become Minister of State and exercise authority. It is loathsome the way he used clever arguments to have the Princess installed as heir apparent and moved to the Middle Castle, and now again has deceived your majesty with his eloquence.” The King anxiously looked back at her and had her sit with him on the throne. Then he asked, “What you say sounds reasonable, and what he says also sounds reasonable. I feel confused and can’t decide. Is there someone who can assess the benefits and harms of these arguments, and determine what bodes good or ill?” The *chūfugimi* replied, “The Regional Officer Ri Yū is very loyal and far-sighted. Why not summon him and inquire? Your majesty perhaps thinks that I am mean-spirited and wish ill for the Princess, and others may have said so. But rather than bewail that, I hope you will do what is good for the country. It is up to you whether you take or do not take Ri Yū’s advice.” The King could not resist her tearful pleading, and said, “In that case, summon Ri Yū.” He soon appeared, and the King repeated to him all that Mō Kokutei had said, then asked, “What do you think? Speak your mind candidly.” Sighing several times, Ri Yū ardently replied, “It is unreasonable for your majesty to believe only one man and doubt the words of thousands. And yet if you now summarily depose the heir apparent, Mō Kokutei will surely mount an insurrection and many people will be killed. If your majesty wishes to rule according to divine will, you should consult the chief shamaness in the Northern Ravine, Kumagimi. She is the daughter of the former Overseer of Katsuren in Chūzan province, Akō. She lost her parents at an early age and had no siblings. The former king took pity on her and granted her a third of her father’s old estate, making her chief among shamanesses and elevating her to royal status. Hence, she is known as Queen of the Northern Ravine, and whether she prays for good fortune or exorcizes evil, the effects are seen immediately. She is over sixty year old and has never married, but supports over thirty disciples. You surely know of her.” Nodding, King Shō Nei said, “I had forgotten about Kumagimi. Send someone to her and inquire.” Thereupon Ri Yū commanded an able retainer to go to the Northern Ravine.

Whipping a swift horse, the retainer left the palace and in a short time arrived at Kumagimi’s house and explained the matter to her. Kumagimi was already in collusion with Ri Yū and lied, saying that the calamities were due to the wrath of Kinmanmon, who had ravaged both sea and land. Assembling her many disciples, she put on her cap of woven grass and her

pure white robe to learn the will of the god. She returned with her reply, “With all due respect, the King has acted contrary to the will of both the gods and the people, and so this calamity has come upon us. In order to bring it to an end, it will be necessary to sacrifice a woman born in the year, month, and day of the dragon by throwing her into the sea. The King himself must do penance to pacify Ōchikyū. If he does not do so, then the land will become wasted, leading to unimaginable calamity.” The retainer was greatly surprised to hear this, and that evening rode back to the palace where he reported what Kumagimi had said. King Shō Nei was dumbfounded. He first told the *chūfugimi* about it, and the next day summoned Ri Yū, saying, “If there is a woman who was born in the year, month, and day of the dragon, she must be sacrificed. If her parents are alive they shall be granted land so that they can live out their lives in peace. If she has children, they shall be appointed to official positions and given whatever they desire. Issue this proclamation throughout the land.” Receiving that command, Ri Yū scouted throughout the *magiri* of Chūzan, Sannan, and Sanboku as well as the thirty-six satellite islands, but no one responded to the proclamation.

Unable to find such a woman, King Shō Nei one day mentioned it to the *chūfugimi*, who said with a smile, “All who are alive cherish their lives, and even if they amass enormous wealth, it is of no use to them if they lose their lives. In this country, it would seem there should be a woman who was born in the year, month, day, and hour of the dragon, but parents love their children and children don’t want to lose their parents, so it is only to be expected that no one would come forth. But have you forgotten? Princess Nei was born in the third month of the year of the dragon, on the day and in the hour of the dragon. Your majesty needs a reminder.” Upon hearing this, the king clapped his hands and said with a heavy heart, “I did indeed forget. The Princess, who turned fifteen this year, was born in the year, month, day, and hour of the dragon. As the father to this people, how could the gods accept it if I were to act out of personal interest in response to the nation’s woes? Rather than search hither and yon, I should offer the Princess as sacrifice and save the people from their distress. And yet, if I lose my only child, who would be my heir to the throne? This is like the saying ‘Kill the rat or spare the dishes.’¹⁸ Even if I succeed in warding off the calamity and the country is at peace, if there is no heir to the throne, it would

¹⁸ 投鼠忌器. The “Jia Yi” section of vol. 48 of the *Han shu* includes a story about a man who had a priceless collection of dishes, some even of jade. He saw a rat among them and threw an object at it, killing it but also breaking vessels.

be of no use. Don't you think so?" The *chūfugimi* replied, "Since the Princess is a step-daughter to me, whatever you command, my words would be of no help to you. But it's at times like this that you discover who is true to you. As a test, your majesty should summon Mō Kokutei and explain the situation to him. If he shows no sign of caring about his personal advantage—and if the Princess's filial piety is genuine—then she will wish to be sacrificed. Then the gods will take pity on her. The people, too, seeing that you are willing to sacrifice your own child in order to alleviate their distress, will be deeply moved by your wisdom, and even if you don't seek out a volunteer, someone is sure to step forth. Then the Princess will remain safe and sound and the calamity will have been averted. And even if you yield the throne to her, there will be no divine punishment." Unaware that he was being lured into a trap by her clever words, King Shō Nei was greatly pleased and said with a note of embarrassment, "What you say is true. It was foolish of me not to have thought of these things." Then with a sign he sent a messenger to the Middle Castle to summon Mō Kokutei.

Chapter Thirty-Four

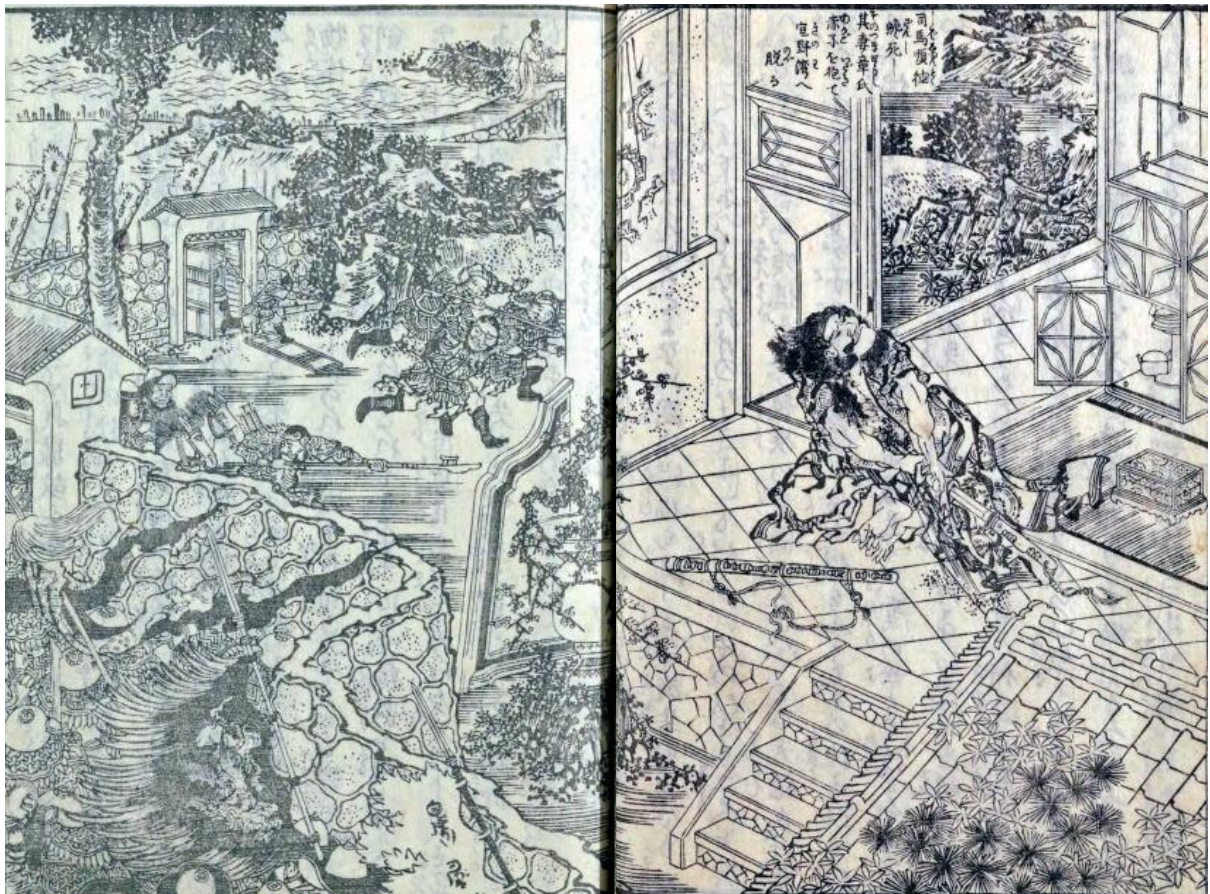
Princess Nei resolves to sacrifice herself,

Lady Ren meets her younger sister and again mourns her deceased mother.

King Shō Nei had not yet informed the Middle Castle about the situation, but Princess Nei had caught wind of what was being talked about in the world and one day said to Lady Ren, “People say that the current disorder on both land and sea is a divine punishment, and for that reason the people are in sore distress having lost their livelihoods. This appears to weigh heavily on my father, the King. I have prayed day and night to Kinmanmon, but perhaps this is not what is needed, and my prayers are to no effect. Now I have heard what the shamaness Kumagimi at the Northern Ravine has said, that if a woman born in the year, month, day, and hour of the dragon is sacrificed to the sea god then the world will again be at peace, and that a proclamation has been sent throughout the country to look for such a woman. The date of my birth accords with what Kumagimi said. Early tomorrow morning I shall go to the palace and express my wish to be sacrificed to the god. This evening will be our last together. Please take measures to care for yourself after I am gone.” As the Princess wiped the tears from her eyes, Lady Ren was alarmed and admonished her, saying, “I never expected to hear such a thing. That a young bud on the royal branch, the heir to the throne and destined to rule, should sacrifice her life even if for the benefit of the country, could the King ever permit such a thing? Don’t say such things, even in jest. Especially since there are crafty people keeping their eyes peeled and their ears pricked up to report to the *chūfugimi* everything that goes on. That’s very careless of you to say such things.” Princess Nei responded, “No, I have both seen and heard in the cases of many people that it is a woman’s fate to be criticized as light-minded.¹ How much more so, then, if she succeeds to the throne and rules, becoming subject to derision and suspicion. I was rashly installed in the Middle Castle amid much ill will, but I do not intend to forget that those in high positions are more vulnerable. If I perform a benevolent act by giving my life to save the people, then the gods will take pity on me, the people will be happy, and the divine punishment will not have been in vain. And if a prince is born, there could be no better fortune for the land. And even if a prince is not born, there are those among the retainers who have royal lineage. To mention

¹ The Princess here quotes verbatim a line from the “Wakana I” chapter of *The Tale of Genji*, spoken by the ailing Retired Emperor Suzaku to his son, the heir apparent.

only a couple, your late father Shiba Juntoku and his kinsman Mō Kokutei are both descendants of Tenson, are they not? Even if their children are brought up to inherit the throne, the lineage goes back to the same source. I've heard of instances in other countries when the throne was yielded to one of high virtue who turned out to be a sage, receiving the acclaim of later generations.² They say that it is a lamentable thing for children to precede their parents in death, but if I were to fall ill, nothing could prevent the possibility of my death. Please resign yourself to the thought that this is all for the good of the country. I have made up my mind." These words were spoken with sincere devotion, but Lady Ren was nevertheless choked up as she said, "What you say is reasonable, but look at things from my position. It still brings tears to my eyes to talk of my father, Shiba Juntoku, who met his death because of a false accusation the same year you were born. It was in autumn fifteen years ago. The King fell critically ill, and Juntoku was so distressed by this that he prayed to Kinmanmon, vowing to offer his life if the King could be spared. Because of his sincere devotion, the gods took pity and cured the King of his illness. But some crafty people secretly smeared blood on his offering of paper streamers and drove a nail



² She appears to be alluding to the succession of the legendary rulers Yao, Shun, and Yu.

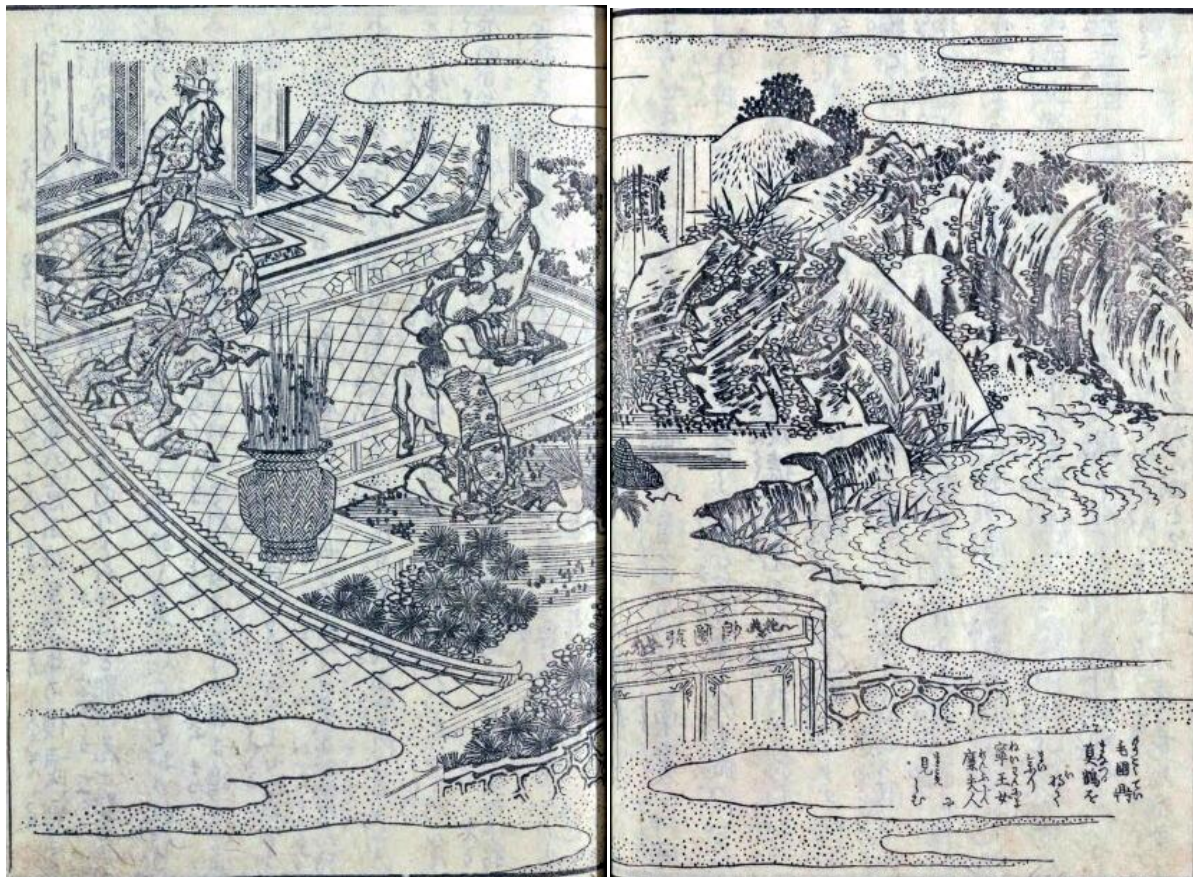
through them, then claiming ‘It was Shiba Juntoku who impiously put a death curse on the King so that he could rule.’ The tongues of the slanderers were sharp but the mind of the King was dull and he took it to be true without investigating it. Eventually, assassins were sent. Unfortunately, the baseless accusation could not be set straight. After setting fire to his house, Juntoku cut his belly open and died. Showing no less loyalty than their lord, many of his retainers stabbed each other and perished in the flames. Some who were too slow to act were taken alive and beheaded. Mother was father’s second wife, hence my step-mother, but she was very bold in spirit and gathered up in her arms my younger sister Manazuru who had just been born that year. Some said that she ran out the back door and no one knows of her whereabouts, while other said that she jumped into the flames and the three of them, parents and child, went up in the same smoke, but no one knows for sure. At that time I was supposed to have been driven from service at court because of my father’s crime, but I was soon to give birth to you, so my expulsion was not carried out. But the plan to make me queen was abandoned and a daughter of the Ri family was installed as *chūfugimi*. I realized that this was all the doing of Ri Yū and his uncle, but as a woman there was no way to make my sorrow manifest, and I could only cry at night like the plovers on Urō beach in my late father’s jurisdiction, shedding bitter tears. True to the saying ‘Strangers gather when there is merriment, relatives become aloof when there is hardship,’³ after my father Juntoku’s death no one backed me except my cousin Mō Kokutei and I spent my days in listlessness. When you were born the King at length came to understand the situation and seemed to regret having condemned Juntoku to death, and the gratitude I felt for his sympathy was of some consolation to me. Waiting for you to grow to maturity seemed worth it when you were chosen as heir, and your future is full of promise. But to nip that flower in the bud, saying that you are showing compassion to save the people, that is for subjects to do. Rulers must preserve themselves of the sake of the country. That is the wise way of a ruler. Don’t talk such nonsense.” Lady Ren employed every argument she could think of. The Princess heard her out, then sighed, saying, “I hear that even the mayfly that is born in the morning and dies in the evening nevertheless values its life. It is not that I am anxious to die, or to cast off inheritance of the throne and ignore the grief of my parents, but as wise as my father is, he sometimes gives credence to slanderers and doubts what others say. But even so, it is difficult to understand why he should issue such a thoughtless command to seek out a suitable person, and even if I do not

³ A line from a poem by Cao Yanyuan in the *Wen xuan* (*Selections of Refined Literature*).

come to mind, Ri Yū and his party will not let him forget. Whoever is selected would not be allowed to refuse. And even if, instead of me, an innocent person is killed, I would have to live with the pain of that. I have heard that anciently in other countries there was the custom of taking aged parent out into the fields or mountains and abandoning them. Whether that is true or not, the custom of responding to the will of the gods with human sacrifice is no less lamentable. The mutability of human life ceases never to return only at the gate of death, and the sadness of yearning and of loathing to part is not something that begins only at that point. It is like the dew on the tips of leaves or droplets by the roots, no one knows which will vanish first,⁴ and all partings are like that. Please understand.” As she attempted to stand up, Lady Ren grabbed her by the sleeve and again remonstrated with her, saying, “This is madness, even if it is an order by the King. Are you going to compare yourself to an ox or a horse?” While the matter was yet to be concluded, Lord Mō Kokutei cleared his throat and, entering through the roofed corridor, crouched down on the other side of the balustrade next to the bamboo blinds and said, “The compassion of the princess in desiring to sacrifice herself for the people is very noble, and the favor shown by Lady Ren is very solid, making it difficult to put one over the other. I have overheard the entire exchange between you and have shed many tears. Now that I think about the augury pronounced by Kumagimi, it is part of a false scheme, and did not come from her heart. It was put into her mouth by evil people conniving to get rid of the Princess. This morning, the King summoned me to the palace and shared something with me in secret, and it was of the same matter. He said, ‘When I recently sought throughout the country for a suitable woman to sacrifice, none was to be found. The Princess is very wise. Go and ask her about it, and make a determination. She is my only beloved child, and this is very pitiable.’ I perceived that he was saying that the Princess should volunteer to sacrifice herself to save the country, and so I responded ‘Yes, your majesty,’ and withdrew.” He had hardly finished speaking when Lady Ren bent over in tears and cried out, “Oh, the mind of an untrustworthy person! Though you knew that this was all the scheming of evil people, you voiced not a single word of remonstrance but just retreated from his presence as if it were nothing. Are you in league with Ri Yū and his ilk? Or afraid of the *chūfugimi*? There is much you could have said, and it makes no sense for you to say that the only heir to the throne should die. I find your way of thinking despicable. Even though my horoscope does not match what was pronounced by Kumagimi, I’ll offer myself for

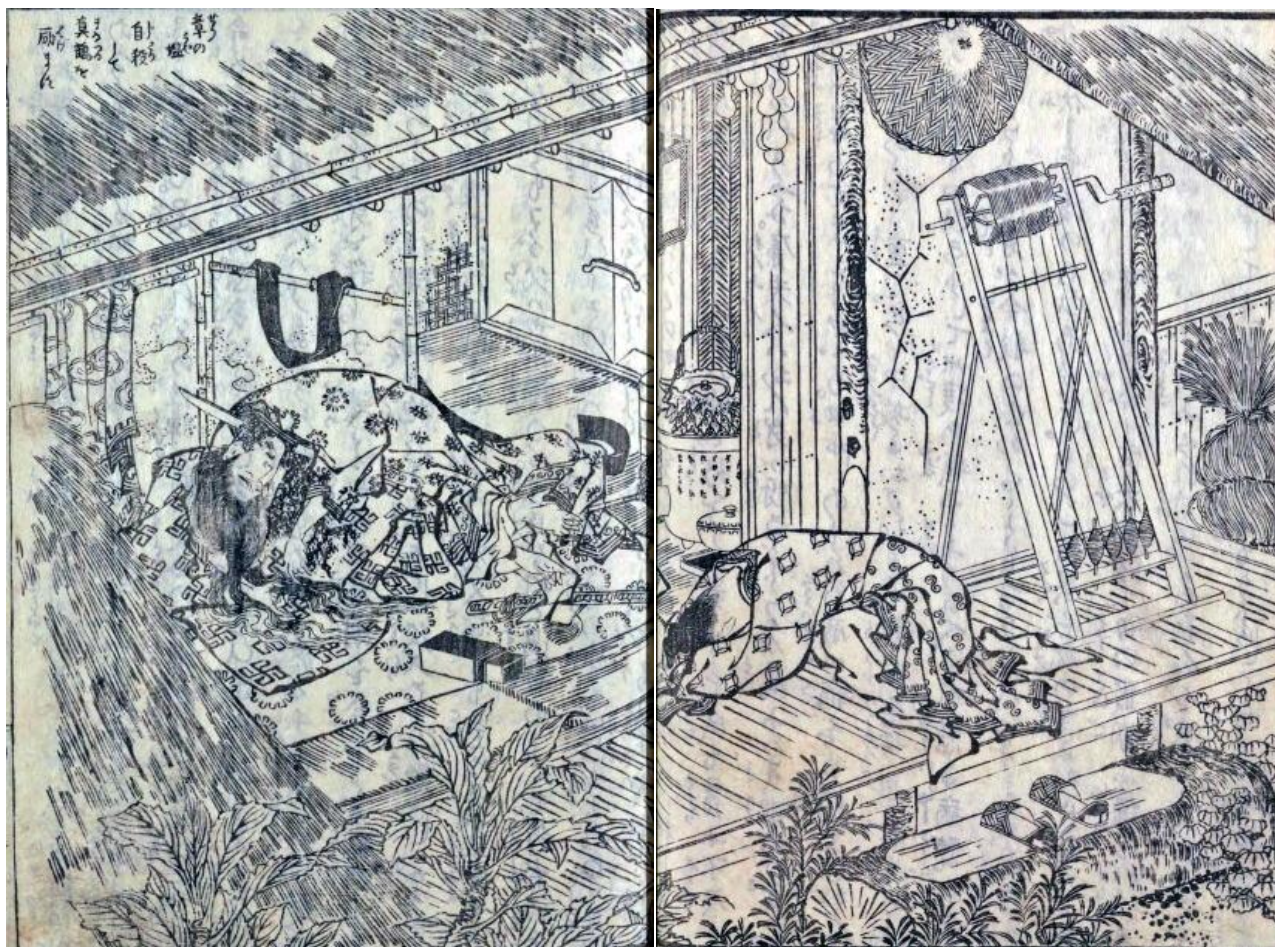
⁴ This alludes to a verse by Sōjō Henjō, cited in chapter 22.

sacrifice!” She repeated these words again and again, her tears of grief cascading down. The Princess, unable to console her, said, “This is all just what I thought. All of this is the effect of bad karma. Don’t feel bitter toward people.” She rubbed the back of Lady Ren, who for a while only coughed and was unable to respond. Seeing this response, Mō Kokutei came forward on his knees and said in a low voice, “It is quite natural that you should be surprised at hearing only that much. Those scoundrels have yet another scheme to adapt to the changing circumstances. That is, if the Princess volunteers to sacrifice herself and goes to the Northern Ravine, even if I am present, I could do nothing to save her. But if she is willing to face danger for a while, I will unexpectedly bring in a woman who is willing to be sacrificed. You can come in now!” He called out, pointing outside. A voice answered, “Yes,” and a folding door to the flower garden opened revealing a peasant girl who extended her hands to the veranda. Her face had no make-up, but was naturally attractive. She was attired in a short-sleeved tunic of fabric woven from banana plant fibers tied with a hempen sash, and on her back she carried a straw bag. Her simple garb had a charm about it. She was about fifteen years old, had eyebrows like the crescent moon, and had something about her like a bud about to blossom.



Then Mō Kokutei explained to the Princess and Lady Ren, “Look. She is from the mountain village of Ginowa where she ekes out a living to support her mother by weaving cloth from banana plant fiber. She was born in the same year as you, princess, moreover in the third month and the day and hour of the dragon. Desiring to sell herself for sacrifice, she was on her way to my house when I ran into her at the foot of Mount Urazoi, and when I heard of her intent, I immediately brought her here. Young woman, tell us about your background, and spare no details.” Urged by Mō Kokutei, the young woman showed no sign of timidity as she opened the straw bag and took out two memorial tablets. Setting them on the veranda, she said, “I am embarrassed to identify myself, but I am Manazuru, the daughter of Minister of State Shiba Juntoku. I was in diapers when my father lost his life and so I have no memory of him, but after I became old enough to understand things, his death has been in my dreams. Taking me in her arms, my mother ran through the raging flames and escaped the swords, wandering stealthily here and there in driving rain and through drenching dew. I am deeply indebted to my mother for raising me, and am filled with vexation when I hear of the false accusation against my father. We finally settled in a mountain home near Ginowa, concealing our identity. As we bewailed our lot and dampened our sleeves, Mother Shō (Manazuru’s mother was from the Shō family and was thus called Mother Shō) has been bedridden with illness these past three years. In spite of my filial devotion the price of medicine is beyond our straitened means, and I had no friends on whom to rely for advice or comfort. I heard that I had an older sister, but she was of high estate in the capital while I was in the desolate countryside. Ashamed of my lowliness, I could not very well write to her and could only think of her with longing. But then the King issued a proclamation seeking a woman born in the year, month, day, and hour of the dragon to be offered as a sacrifice. Though it was published throughout the land, no one came forth. Then it was rumored that the King would offer himself as sacrifice. When my mother heard of that, she was greatly surprised and said to me, ‘When you were born in the year, month, day, and hour of the dragon, Lady Ren was pregnant, and I heard that she would give birth within a month. And indeed, it seems that the Princess was born in the intercalary third month⁵ on the day and hour of the dragon. It does not seem right for the heir apparent to the throne to throw her life away for the sake of the country, but since evil people are behind such a plan, what can be done about it?

⁵ In the lunar calendar, a “leap month” is added every 32 or 33 months, with the result that the year in question had two months of the dragon.



This is an opportune time for a mother and daughter to sacrifice their lives out of loyal devotion and cleanse the father's name. You are a daughter of Minister of State Shiba Juntoku. Facing such a situation, do not show regret and be derided because of lineage or rearing. Though Lady Ren is your older sister, she is my step-daughter. And though the Princess is in the royal line, to her we are only maternal relatives and if known to the world, would be a blight to her name. Our responsibility toward her is serious. Go immediately to the Middle Castle and identify yourself to Mō Kokutei. Tell him of your mother's intentions and offer yourself for sacrifice. And lest you worry about leaving me behind to waste away in illness, I'll strengthen your resolve with this blade before your very eyes.' No sooner had she finished speaking than she took a dagger from under her pillow and ended her life. Though I wanted to shed tears at such a parting, I was unable to. Rather, my floundering heart became as hard as that of a demon. I glared with bitterness at Mount Urazoi as the smoke from my mother's remains wafted up before it, then my grief propelled me on a journey through the port of Maki. I made haste to Iso Village, from which Kuba Peak was visible. It seemed like the Mountain of Death separating the phenomenal world

and the afterlife, a mountain I must cross. And I have finally arrived at the Middle Castle. This is my father's memorial tablet, and this is my mother's. The earnest plea of the three of us is that the honor of my late father be restored." With that, she concluded her long account. As she listened, Lady Ren was constantly wiping away her copious tears, as if she could see before her eyes the mother taking her own life to urge her daughter to sacrifice hers. Stumbling forward, Lady Ren clutched the two memorial tablets and, her grief almost making her faint, at length wiped her tears and said, "Manazuru, I am indeed your older sister, and this is the Princess. Our father was a man of rare devotion, but he suffered the ill fate of becoming the object of vicious slanderers. After his death, nothing was said in the palace about mother's whereabouts or what had happened to my sister, and as I was in service in the capital much envy and many icy stares were directed at me so that I had to tip-toe my way through life. But even for a moment I never forgot, and in my dreams I often met you. To hear of mother's end my grief is multiplied. And now, the person who would substitute for the Princess whom I bore in such affliction is my younger sister, duty-bound to my mother. My uneasy heart is like a restive steed that cannot be calmed, and I don't know what to do. I, too, would join you on the same path to death, but remain stubbornly alive." With that she again dissolved in tears. Manazuru was about to dash up the stairs, but was held back by a sense of shame. But straightening herself, she said resentfully, "So, you are my older sister? My long held wish to see you safe and sound is at last fulfilled. But to see you moved to tearful lamentation because of my intention is pathetic." Moved by compassion, Princess Nei was also unable to stanch her tears, and ordered her to come forward. In compliance, Mō Kokutei took Manazuru by the hand and led before the Princess, who looked at her steadily and admonished her, "Both of you have shown exemplary devotion, true as wife and daughter of Juntoku. How could the gods possibly accept the death of such an uncommonly filial daughter? I am filled with admiration for your noble intentions, but to endure such a travesty as your death would make me less than a beast. Please return immediately." Straightening herself, Manazuru replied, "I cannot think of that as a command. This is my one chance to restore my father's honor. Therefore, you appear to be lacking in compassion if you do not accept my life given for both sovereign and parent. Do you not think so?" She looked at her sister, Lady Ren, who nodded and said, "That's very noble of you, Manazuru. Having been raised in poverty and supporting your mother, and then giving your life out of devotion and filial piety, you have no peers among young women of the world. How sad that such a blossom should

fall while still in the bud. The joy of this reunion is overshadowed by the thought of tomorrow's parting." But Princess Nei would not tolerate that and again tried various admonitions, whereupon Mō Kokutei came forward and said, "Princess, Lady Ren, please put your minds at ease. Even if Manazuru is offered as a sacrifice, I have planned so that she will not actually die. Once her loyalty and filiality are known and her father Juntoku's honor is restored, Manazuru's sacrifice will be carried out only provisionally. She will be able to enter society with her head up, and if she serves in the Middle Castle she will be above the low-rank of the warrior class [*nama-haikin*] (*haikin* are warriors), and will offer protection. Leave everything to me." His words bespoke reliability. Will Mō Kokutei be able to save Manazuru from being sacrificed? Or will he fail? You'll find out if you read the next chapter.

Shiba Juntoku, Mō Kokutei, Ri Yū, Kumagimi, and others all appear in the *Chūzan denshinroku*. Yet while they seem similar to what is described here, the time frames are in some cases different. Also, in the section on Ryukyu topography in volume four of that work, under the entry for "Northern Ravine" it says "Anciently in the Northern Ravine in a place called Muro there lived an evil dragon that would create typhoons and much distress. Thus, a maiden was offered for sacrifice. A daughter of the Shō family in Ginowa, Manazuru, responded to the search for a suitable woman, giving up her life to support her mother. Such filial devotion appealed to Heaven, the dragon was killed, and harm was averted. The King was greatly pleased." Now I have arranged these things, including Ryukyuan personal and place names mixing Chinese and Japanese readings of characters. My recording of these things is not slipshod. I have consulted old books and relied on old tales, so there may also be things that are baseless or erroneous.

Chapter Thirty-Five

Out of filial devotion, Manazuru goes to the Northern Ravine,
Kokutei boldly defeats Kumagimi.

Having admonished Princess Nei and Lady Ren, Mō Kokutei went to the palace where he reported in detail Manazuru's desire out of filial devotion to offer herself as sacrifice. King Shō Nei heaved a deep sigh upon hearing this and said, "I had thought that, as parent of the people, in order to save the country I should offer Princess Nei for sacrifice. But the Princess has already been installed in the Middle Castle as heir apparent. If she were to come to harm, then removing this distress from the country would be like elbowing one's way through a rainstorm, and I could hardly avoid censure by later generations as a depraved ruler. Manazuru is the daughter of Shiba Juntoku, isn't she? Her response to our search for a sacrifice is most praiseworthy. Her father, Juntoku, was a devoted minister beloved of the people, and I have long regretted my error of having condemned him. It is thus a pity to sacrifice his daughter by casting her into the depths of the sea, but that being her true intention, for the sake of the people it cannot be helped. Accordingly, Manazuru shall be given the rank of *myōbu* for going to the Northern Ravine as sacrifice. Her father, Juntoku, will be posthumously elevated to junior first rank and given the title of Assistant Grand Minister while her mother, from the Shō family, will be given the title of Protectress of the Land. Convey this directive." Elated to receive this cordial command, Mō Kokutei quickly withdrew to the Middle Palace. When he relayed the purport of the command to them, Lady Ren and Princess Nei, and also Manazuru, felt as if they had finally seen the light of day. Turning in the direction of the palace, they offered thanks. Now with no regrets, Manazuru could hasten toward death. She purified herself in anticipation of her sacrifice the following day. At the same time the *chūfugimi* and Ri Yū were disgrunteled by this turn of events contrary to their wishes, but it had already been determined, and there was nothing they could do about it. They seethed in ever greater hatred for Lady Ren and Mō Kokutei, again racking their brains to devise another dreadful scheme.

King Shō Nei himself went to the seashore by the Northern Ravine to witness Kumagimi's miraculous powers in the sacrifice of Manazuru to appease the gods of Kinmanmon. Augury had determined that it was an auspicious day, and so many officials, from the Council of Three on down to the Senior Pages, Captains, and Junior Pages assembled at the Northern

Ravine. The shamaness Kumagimi, along with her thirty or so disciples, had erected an altar by the seashore and, having draped sacred ropes on its four sides, stood waiting. Everything appeared very grand and ceremonial. Since this event had not been kept secret, crowds gathered on the shore from such villages as Hamagawa, Sunabe, Nokuni, Nozato, Tamayose, Yara, Kuwae, Katena, Mount Heian, Ire, and Maekusuku. They made obeisance to the King, shouting “Banzai!” As everyone waited anxiously, Lord Mō Kokutei finally arrived along with the new *myōbu* Manazuru, who was clad in a pure robe of banana fiber cloth and was riding in a palanquin of unfinished wood carried by numerous bearers. Seeing that they had come, the king had them set the palanquin down next to the altar. The bearers quickly retreated, and without waiting to be commanded Regional Officer Ri Yū stepped forward and, peering into the palanquin and said derisively, “Since you are the daughter of an insurrectionist, you’ve had no choice but to wander about, feeling cold in the midst of warmth and suffering hunger in years of plenty, and rather than starve to death you think it better to offer yourself as sacrifice. In desperation and having been abandoned by society, you saw an opportunity to steal for yourself a reputation for devotion and filial piety, to expunge your father’s crime of insurrection and gain unprecedented titles for yourselves. Your joining the ranks of *myōbu* is just an example of the proverbial ‘winning by a fluke.’ Kumagimi, be quick about tossing this woman into the sea and show your miraculous powers!” Answering “Yes, sir,” Kumagimi quietly descended the altar along with seven shamanesses and, circling around the palanquin from the right, roughly raised the blinds. Extending her wrinkled arm, she roughly grabbed Manazuru by the hair and pulled her out. Her beautiful sidelocks rudely disheveled, poor Manazuru’s crimson face was sullied with sand, like plum blossom petals fallen in the wind. But she had prepared herself for such treatment and showed no sign of agitation, yielding to her tormentor and rolling out of the palanquin, like a goose being taken by a falcon. Everyone watching sighed, muttering among themselves, “Oh, how pitiful! She desires to give herself in place of the heir apparent and to relieve the suffering of the people. Such consideration for others is a rarity. Moreover, she is very beautiful. The way of the gods is indeed inscrutable that they would accept the sacrifice of such a maiden in order to grant mortals their wish.”

Then Kumagimi marched Manazuru toward the shore, intoning some mystical incantation. As she was about to push the maiden off a hundred-feet high precipice into the sea, Mō Kokutei rushed forward and hurriedly stopped her, saying, “The inclination of the gods is to



show mercy, and the basis of mortal humanity is life. Which of all living things does not value life? If you now offer up a person as sacrifice and it proves to be of no effect, the sin would be upon your head. If the gods do not accept the sacrifice, how could you ever make up for such an error? You're putting yourself in a very precarious position.” Exposing her half-rotted teeth, Kumagimi guffawed and said, “During all of my sixty years I have participated in rituals for the country and know very well the mind of the gods. And everyone from the King on down to the peasantry puts their full trust in me. So why are you preventing me from carrying out this sacrifice and telling me that I’m putting myself in a precarious position? Let go of me!” Exasperated, she tried to free herself, but Mō Kokutei would not release his grasp, and said, “Ever since the founding of this country, when the gods of Kinmanmon have come bringing woe or weal, good or ill fortune, they have made an appearance before people’s eyes, and if Ōchikyū, the god of the sea, were to demand human sacrifice, why would he not appear personally and take it? In all of the thirty-seven *magiri* and thirty-six satellite islands, where is there a place not under royal rule? And who is not a subject of the King? Though our lord the King has gone to the



trouble of coming to this shore, it is insolent on the part of Ōchikyū not to appear and express his pleasure at the ritual. He is not a proper god, but is an evil deity. If you know the mind of the gods, then it should be an easy matter for you to send two or three of your disciples to receive the god here. Why not send some right away?" With that he suddenly kicked two or three false shamanesses, sending them tumbling down to sink below the waves. Ri Yū was enraged upon seeing this, and ordered, "Mō Kokutei has gone mad! Won't any of the Junior Pages restrain him?" Mō Kokutei glared at him. "Kumagimi has misled the King to sacrifice women. If there is no effect from this sacrifice, then the death of innocent people will have been an error on the part of his majesty. It is for that reason that I am putting Ōchikyū to the test, to see whether or not he will accept the sacrifice. Whoever prevents me is not a loyal subject. What crime have I committed that I should be bound?" Daunted by the force of Kokutei's words, no one responded to Ri Yū's command. Again glaring at Kumagimi, Kokutei said, "A few false shamanesses have been dispatched, but Ōchikyū has still not appeared, and it is strange that he has made no reply. If you yourself part the waves to receive him, that god will surely not refuse your invitation. It is

disrespectful to keep his majesty waiting. Go quickly!” He grabbed her firmly by her hair and was about to throw her over the precipice when Kumagimi, alarmed and with a face turned bluer than the sea, pressed her palms together and begged forgiveness, saying, “Truly, I did not receive the will of the god of the sea. I only prayed at the Mizuchi Mound on Mount Kyūkyū and mysteriously realized the fortunes of the land for this year. It was wrong of me to say that human sacrifice was needed. Please, spare my life.” Mō Kokutei laughed with scorn as if to say “Just what I expected.” Then drawing Manazuru aside, he went to the side of the altar and addressed the King. “Kumagimi’s evil plot has now been exposed. Please forego plans for human sacrifice. It was a nefarious plot to advise you to seek out a woman born in the year, month, day, and hour of the dragon for sacrifice, as you no doubt now realize, and so considering these factors, please make a judgment concerning this scheme.” He spoke without a trace of reservation. Nodding, King Shō Nei said, “Had it not been for you, Mō Kokutei, not only would I have killed a loyal and filial maiden, but my moral standing as a ruler would have been seriously compromised and I would have lost the trust of the people. Oh, what a precarious position I was in! Kumagimi’s crimes cannot be overlooked, but she is a woman, and so instead of the death penalty, she and her disciples shall be banished. And yet I do not understand how she prayed to the god at the Izuchi Mound and knew the fortunes of the land for the year. If henceforth another fool should pray at that mound, who knows what kind of mysteries they might spout and lead gullible people astray? I shall climb that mountain myself and open up that mound.” Mō Kokutei vigorously remonstrated, saying, “The Mizuchi Mound is where the bones of the dragon are buried that Tenson slew in ancient days. It is a historic site where he erected a stone and planted a pine tree as a marker, and that is why it is called Mount Kyūkyū [Old Dragon]. Thus, it would be a grave solecism to open the mound just because of Kumagimi’s frivolous words. Your majesty, I beg of you, please cultivate your virtue, take pity of the people, and rid the land of this heaven-sent disaster. During the reign of a sage king, there is no wickedness among the people. If you save the people by means of benevolence and justice, then who would follow Kumagimi’s example in performing suspicious rites at Mizuchi Mound?” King Shō Nei listened carefully, but appeared unwilling to accept this latest advice. Shaking his head, he said, “You are overly concerned. A site that venerates an evil deity is a detriment to popular customs. What mysterious powers could the Mizuchi Mound possibly have? If we do not now open it and dispose of it, it will surely be used for evil purposes in the future and will spread harm. I have already made up my mind, so

don't remonstrate with me any further. Manazuru is now a *myōbu*. Take her to the Middle Castle and put her in the service of Princess Nei. It's already late today. Early tomorrow morning I shall ascend Mount Kyūkyū. Take note of that." With that announcement, he returned to the palace.

Then ordering the military officers to expel Kumagimi and her disciples, Mō Kokutei took Manazuru to the Middle Castle. Ri Yū was seething with vexation that his plot had not been successful. But if he tried to save Kumagimi from her punishment, his role in the plot would be exposed, so he was unable to contend with Mō Kokutei. Ri Yū caught up with Mō Kokutei, who looked back at him. Ri Yū wanted to say something, but could only mumble bitterly like a mute. The division between good and evil, malice and justice became as clear as the four forks in the Northern Ravine. The account of the filial daughter is recorded for posterity in the fourth volume of *Denshinroku*: "Anciently, at Muro in the Northern Ravine there was an evil dragon that stirred up typhoons and caused destruction. The king issued a proclamation seeking a maiden to sacrifice. A daughter of the Shō family who was caring for her mother in Ginowa responded. The gods of Heaven were impressed with her filiality and slew the dragon, allaying the disaster. The girl was given court rank." That accords in large part with what appears in fictional accounts, aside from minor details. It is impossible to say which is correct.

Chapter Thirty-Six

King Shō Nei rides a palanquin up Takamine,
Mōun appears from the ancient tomb on Mount Kyūkyū.

And so King Shō Nei, paying no heed to Mō Kokutei's warning, set out the next day attended by Ri Yū and other retainers to Takamine in order to open the Mizuchi Mound. Now "Takamine" was also the name of a *magiri*, and is another name for Mount Kyūkyū. The area is part of Sannan Province and lies three leagues south of the palace. After the eight peaks of the northeast it is the tallest, with clouds surrounding it just below the summit, and it is very imposing of one looks up at it from its base. Directly south of it the blue sea stretches out with tall waves resembling mountain ranges, and if one looks down on that from the mountain, it appears to undulate. There are two springs in its foothills, one called Keisen and the other Hōsen. Next to them is a stone bridge known as Ōzato Bridge. To the southeast is another mountain, Mount Kuniyoshi. Ōkusuku, Maeri, Yoza, and Oku are all villages that are part of Takamine. As you ascend the winding mountain path, droplets of dew blown from tree leaves seem like a rain shower, and in the depth of the shade under the trees it is almost like permanent night. A strong



rope had been tied to the king's palanquin, its bearers pulling as well as carrying, while the retainers panted as they parted their way through kudzu and wisteria vines. When they finally reached the Mizuchi Mound, the bearers set the palanquin down beneath a tree and the officials crouched down on both sides. His majesty looked up at the mound and saw the white pine, its branches skimming the heavens like a dragon in motion. The stone monument was partly buried, and looked like a crouching wildcat. Having passed through so many ages, it gave its viewers a chill. It was truly an unusual ancient mound. Then giving orders to the many laborers, Ri Yū shouted, "Hurry and dig it up!" With their rakes and shovels in hand, after more than four hours they unearthed the stone monument, pushing it over and exposing a massive amount of ancient, hardened resin from the pine. When they had dug to a depth of about ten feet, they struck a stone chest with legs, and heard a sudden rumbling from within the earth, like the ringing of a bell. The King, wondering what that could be, pricked up his ears but could not look on. The laborers threw down their rakes and shovels and stepped back dumbfounded.

At this time Mō Kokutei, who had only just arrived hoping yet to warn the King, looked on this scene and prostrated himself before the palanquin, saying, "Your majesty, you had no use for my warnings and have opened the Mizuchi Mound, and thus such eerie things are happening. Since Tenson constructed this mound on Takamine and also erected stone monuments on Little Ryukyu (also known as Ōshima) and Akase to pacify demons, a thousand years have passed, and it has remained an enduring ancient site. If you open it now without cause, you will free those demons who will create havoc, and you will regret it. Please, cover it over and leave it as it was. Opening ancient mounds is the work of mountain brigands. Even if we are fortunate and there is no divine punishment, there will be no advantage. Harm to the people can come from only a momentary lapse in judgment. I fail to understand your actions." Hearing this well-reasoned warning, King Shō Nei felt some regret but remained silent. Muttering to himself that the King was being spineless, Ri Yū came forth and raised his voice, "Mō Kokutei is exaggerating. And in comparing your majesty to mountain brigands he is guilty of *lèse-majesté*, and should be punished. Now your majesty is frightened by the sound of a bell within the earth, and will not open the chest. But if you leave this as it is, the people will make light of you as a ruler with no backbone, and some might turn against you. To use even a particle of earth to cover up a useless ancient mound is a waste of the country's resources. Opening it up is the way of a wise king. How can it be compared to opening graves to rob swords and mirrors? Do not hesitate."



Emboldened by the sneering words, King Shō Nei was enraged, saying, “Mō Kokutei, with your fainthearted reproofs you have dishonored your lord. Depart!” Mō Kokutei would have ventured to continue his remonstrance, but the King’s retainers pushed him away, warning him and dragging him to a distance. Emboldened by this, Ri Yū fiercely ordered the laborers, “Hurry up and unearth the stone chest,” but they did not respond, remaining back and only exchanging glances. Infuriated, Ri Yū drew his sword and threatened them, “‘The king’s business is not to be lightly regarded.’¹ Whoever resists this command will be decapitated and will be buried in this hole, so decide right now which you prefer: to have your head lopped off, or to pull up this chest!” Under such a threat the laborers had no choice, and taking ten thick hemp ropes, fastened them to the chest on all sides. Then they pulled the ropes using a windlass. It turned out to be as light as lifting feathers. Even after they hauled it up, the sound of a bell ringing did not stop. This stone chest measured five feet on all sides, and though it was impossible to determine its weight, the workers were all spooked by the fact that it was drawn up so easily, and no one would open

¹ 王事靡盬, a phrase from the “Odes of Tang” (唐風) chapter of the *Shijing* (Classic of Poetry).

it. Even more incensed at seeing their reluctance, Ri Yū shouted, “What are you waiting for? Open the lid!” Thereupon eight or nine dauntless young men stepped forward. When they put their hands on the stone chest to open it, immediately there was a crashing sound like innumerable thunderbolts and the chest exploded, sending stone fragments flying in every direction, instantly striking down dozens of men, breaking arms and legs, injuring them in their sides, and leaving them smeared with blood. Seeing that this was no ordinary matter, the King’s retainers gathered round to protect the palanquin, taking up their lances and bows, shouting confused order to each other. Finally Ri Yū’s spirit was dampened, leaving him in a daze and not knowing what to do.

When both King and subjects finally regained their senses and fixed their eyes on the shattered chest, a thick cloud arose from it, soon appearing to hover above the ground. Then they were amazed to see a strange looking bony man with a prominent nose, clad in a tattered and rotted orange robe. Sitting cross-legged on the stone base of the chest, he held a rusted bell in his hand. His brows were white, his lips red, his beard yellow, his face black, and his nails, which were half as long as his fingers, were blue. He was so emaciated that his bones protruded, his skin was caked with grime, and he was as bent as bamboo in a downpour. He did not seem quite human, but then not quite a demon. Everyone looked at him with suspicion, not knowing what to make of him. Then with a yawn, the strange little man opened his fiery eyes and, looking alternately at his left and right hands, recited:

When Heaven had not yet given birth to me,	天公未生我
all was dark and I knew nothing.	冥冥無所知
Then in an instant Heaven gave birth to me,	天公忽生我
but having been born, what am I to do?	生我復何為
With nothing to wear, I am left cold,	無衣遣我寒
with nothing to eat, I am left hungry.	無食令我飢
Were Heaven and I the same	還爾天公我

when I was not yet born?²

還我未生時

Then he burst out laughing. Ri Yū cautiously addressed the strange man, “The great king wishes to know who you are.” Ignoring Ri Yū, the man peered instead at the spyhole of the palanquin and said, “Your majesty need not be suspicious. In a land far to the west there was a holy man who sought redemption for all sentient beings, releasing them from suffering and granting them comfort. That was none other than Buddha. And in the east there are also holy beings who, out of compassion for the unenlightened, bring blessing and avert disaster. Since they are immortal, they are called gods. And between the far west and the far east, there are also holy men. They cultivate the true way, maintain longevity, and along with Heaven and Earth do not perish. These are known as saintly wizards. My way combines all these three. The appearance of higher knowledge³ is a mystery. Ever since the founding of this land I have been sequestered in this mountain, and through the eighteen thousand years and twenty-five generations of Tenson rulers, there has never yet been so sagacious a ruler as your majesty. Thus, your benevolent rule has enhanced the country, and the time has arrived for me to come out. I made a pact with the first Tenson ruler that I would hide myself in this tomb to pacify the evil dragon. The common folk only know this as Mizuchi Mound, and do not realize that it is actually a sacred grotto for a wizard. If your majesty will set aside your suspicions and put your trust in me, I shall henceforth be of service in your government. I shall make your lifespan equal to Heaven and Earth, enrich the land, and bring peace to the people. Please witness my miraculous powers.” Then he intoned an incantation, whereupon the laborers who had been struck down by the flying shards of rock stood up, and those whose arms and legs had been wounded were made whole.

Seeing this miracle, King Shō Nei trusted him and, emerging from his palanquin and wiping tears of gratitude from his face, he bowed several times to the strange man, saying, “O wizard, please do not abandon me, and grant me your instruction.” Ri Yū and everyone in the retinue, including the laborers, were both dumbfounded and awed, but tapping their heads to make sure they could believe their eyes, they all offered congratulatory words, “Since the founding of our country, Tenson rule has passed through twenty-five generations, but that such a wizard has now appeared owes entirely to the benevolent government of our king, and the people

² Verses by the late Sui/early Tang poet Wang Fanzhi 王梵志 (7th cent.).

³ Abhijñā, special knowledge attained through virtuous living and meditation.

are very fortunate. Nothing could bring us greater joy.” Beaming with a smile, King Shō Nei again addressed the man, extending a cordial invitation, “O wizard, please ride to the palace with me in the palanquin. We shall select a purified area to build a meditation hall where you can take up residence.” The man shook his head, saying, “Since I shun the burning house of the sullied world,⁴ I do not wish to leave this mountain. But if your majesty ever has need of me, I shall appear in an instant even without a summon.” King Shō Nei praised him for his virtue, and said, “Please do as you wish about remaining in the mountain. I still do not know your name. If I send a messenger to inquire about your welfare, how should he address you?” The man replied, “Originally I have had neither surname nor given name. I have drunk the mists, bathed in the rain, and made the clouds both my home and my vehicle. Thus, henceforth you may call me Mōun [Blind Cloud].” The King nodded, then turned to Ri Yū and the others, saying, “You must all revere this man and address him as Most Reverend Master Mōun. Had I given heed to Mō Kokutei and not opened the Mizuki Mound, would I ever have met this wizard? Certainly not.” Speaking triumphantly, he cast a sidelong glance at Mō Kokutei and then again bowed to Mōun. But Kokutei did not pay the slightest reverence to Mōun, and only sighed as if he had not heard. The sun was setting and it was getting dark in the mountains. Mō Kokutei raised his voice, “How long will your majesty remain here? It’s growing dark and the way back is difficult. Retainers, why have you not made preparations?” Mōun again spoke up, “You’ll have many mountains to pass through, and there is the danger of wild beasts, snakes, and scorpions. You should not wait longer. Tomorrow I shall go to the palace to express both my gratitude and my debt to the country. Please return quickly.” King Shō Nei reluctantly agreed and, bidding farewell to Mōun and promising to meet again, he sat in the palanquin and, accompanied by his retainers, Senior Pages, Captains, Junior Pages, and laborers, began his descent down the mountain. Remaining behind for a moment, Ri Yū prostrated himself before Mōun, then mounted his horse and followed the entourage.

Halfway down the mountain, something occurred to Mō Kokutei and he turned back, making his way through the trees. Fitting an arrow into his bow, he approached within shooting distance and saw Mōun still sitting there in proper form, chanting a sutra in a thin voice. Secretly pleased, Mō Kokutei drew the bowstring as far as it would go, then released it with a whizzing sound. But strangely enough, the bow broke into three pieces and the arrow fell ineffectively to

⁴ A reference to the parable of the burning house (i.e., the phenomenal world) in *The Lotus Sutra*.

the ground. He fell back head over heels, scraping his knee as he tumbled down and suffering a blow to his chest. He lay unconscious in the grass. Mō Kokutei's wife, Niigaki, worried that her husband had not returned that evening, sent a few house servants to the palace to inquire, but on the way there they ran into some retainers who had been with Kokutei and said that they had lost sight of him halfway down the mountain and that he had not returned to the palace. Together they went to Takamine and found someone lying in the grass at the foot of the mountain. When one of them brought a torch, they were shocked to see that it was their lord, Mō Kokutei. They excitedly gathered around him, helping him up and attending to his injuries. When he finally came to his senses, he gritted his teeth and lamented to himself, "How deplorable! The King would not listen to my warning and went ahead and opened the Mizuchi Mound, releasing a devil. And it is shameful that he does not realize this and pays homage. Now that both King and subjects are enthralled by this uncanny monk the country is in great danger. How regrettable! That sinister monk possesses supernatural powers. My lone loyalty has proven powerless." Then looking back at his retainers, he grew silent. Rubbing his back, they asked, "How do you feel, sir? We have come to take you back." Nodding, Mō Kokutei replied, "My chronic chest pain has acted up again and I've unexpectedly spent the evening in a place like this. I feel better now. Let's head back." He stood up and, supported by his retainers, arrived at the Middle Castle around two o'clock on the morning. Having hit his chest when he fell, he was still in great pain, unable to sleep and without appetite. His wife, Niigaki, a very reliable woman, was worried about her husband's injury, and the next day went to various sacred groves to pray for him. A doctor also visited daily, administering medicine and tending to him. After about ten days his injury was healed. He then went to the Middle Castle, where both Princess Nei and Lady Ren were very glad to see him. "We had heard that your illness was very grave and were beside ourselves with worry, but you've recovered sooner than we expected." They provided him with saké and viands, then with serious look on their faces told him about conditions at the palace and about Mōun. Then sidling up to them, he said, "Lately, the children in the street have been singing, 'An evil god has come, The ocean tides are impure. An evil god has come, The white sands have turned into crabs.' This all refers to Mōun. Even if it results in my death, I must once again remonstrate with the King." Princess Nei responded, "No, Everyone is intoxicated by this, and even if you are sober, your warning will be of no effect. Even if you proceed with your warning, if the slanderers hear of it there is no telling what kind of plot they'll devise. In that

case, it would be of no benefit to the King. Would it not be careless of you to cause your wife and children to grieve if you lost your life innocently? Just keep your head low and avoid disaster. I want you to take care not to become the object of the slanderers schemes.” Lady Ren also tried to put his mind at ease, saying “If something untoward should happen to you, who would be a support for the Princess? For now, just bearing the unbearable is the way to be a loyal subject.” Sighing, Mō Kokutei replied, “I’ll do as you say. Please put your minds at rest.” Then he went to the palace.

Chapter Thirty-Seven

Mō Kokutei is commanded to go to Little Ryukyu,¹

Princess Nei presents the gem and returns to the Dragon Palace.²

And so on that day, Mō Kokutei left the Middle Castle and went to the royal palace to report his recovery. King Shō Nei was sitting in the main hall of the Dragon Palace with an assembly consisting of Ri Yū and lesser officials listening to the appeals of the people when a herald announced, “Lord Mō Kokutei has come.” At the command “Let him enter,” Mō Kokutei reverentially ascended the steps and prostrated himself. Turning to him, King Shō Nei said, “I had heard that you recovered from your illness and was just now thinking of sending an official to summon you, so you have come at a good time. You’ve heard, haven’t you, that an appeal has been made from Shimakita in Little Ryukyu? The stone monument at Akase weeps every night, just like a person, and every morning the image of the woman carved on it is stained with tears. As you know, that stone monument was erected by Tenson, the founder of our country, and is indeed an ancient work of divine hands. From former times it has thus shown miraculous efficacy in predicting good or ill fortune for the times. You are to go there and ascertain the facts of the matter. If the claims are true, you are to make an offering in accordance with ancient precedent and conduct rites.” Upon hearing detailed instructions, Mō Kokutei bowed deeply and said, “Your majesty has no doubt heard the children’s ditties that recently have been sung on the streets. None of these can be thought to augur well for these times, but ‘Evil never defeats virtue.’³ If your majesty is aware of the bad omen and fears the will of Heaven, then you should not give in to a penchant for curiosities. If you forego severe governance, levy lighter tribute, manifest virtue, encourage goodness and punish evil, then demons will disappear and not be able to create disaster. Please give it your utmost consideration.” With that, he withdrew from the royal palace and returned to the Middle Castle, where he told Princess Nei and Lady Ren about the King’s command. Then he said to Manazuru, “Today I have received an unexpected command to set out for Little Ryukyu. They say that it is more than eighty leagues away over the sea, but since the waters are rough, the three-day journey is uncertain. It will likely be more that

¹ Now better known as Amami Ōshima.

² That is, the Ryukyu royal palace.

³ A line from *The Records of the Grand Historian (Shi ji)*.

ten days before I return. During that time, do not leave the Princess's side, and serve her well. Don't let her carelessly eat any delicacies or rice cakes sent from the *chūfugimi*. Though you are a woman, you are stronger in loyal devotion than any manly man. Keep these things close to your heart, and be careful." With these cordial instructions, he set out the following day for Little Ryukyu.

Now the matter of the stone monument at Akase was weighing on King Shō Nei's mind, and as he thought to ask Mōun about it, the wizard suddenly appeared in the main hall of the Dragon Palace. The king was both amazed and delighted to see him, and before he could utter a word, Mōun said, "Your majesty is suspicious of what is happening with the stone monument at Akase, but in foreign lands such things are common. Anciently, during the reign of King Jie⁴ of the Xia dynasty, a rock on Mount Tai wept, causing the mountain to flee.⁵ Also, they say that when the priest Sheng Gong assembled rocks on Tiger Hill and preached to them, they nodded in agreement. Also, the stone of Weiyu often spoke,⁶ and Zhou Ting's stone communed with the poor.⁷ There are too many other examples to mention. If you are still uncertain, use the two Ryukyu gems to perform an exorcism." King Shō Nei readily agreed, and dispatched Ri Yū to the Middle Castle. Whipping his horse to a gallop, Ri Yū soon arrived at the residence of the heir apparent and relayed the command to Princess Nei. "You are to surrender the gems." The Princess had Manazuru bring the box containing the gems and, together with Lady Ren, handed them to Ri Yū. He then said, "It is not that I doubt you, but I must make certain. Break the seal." Then he handed the box back to her. The Princess broke the seal herself, untied the cord, and opened it. There was only one gem inside! How could that be? In a panic she turned the double box upside down and shook the bag in which it had been stored. Then together with Lady Ren and Manazuru, she ran to the treasure storeroom and searched everywhere but was unable to find the missing gem. Secretly pleased to witness this scene, Ri Yū quickly mounted his horse and raced back to the palace, where he informed the King of the matter. Greatly surprised, the King said with irritation, "The two Ryukyu gems are a priceless national treasure that has been handed down since the time of Tenson. But if Princess Nei has lost one of them, how could succession

⁴ 1728-1675 BCE.

⁵ This story is related in the collection *Shuyiji* by Ren Fang (460-508).

⁶ Weiyu is a place in the state of Jin. This incident is recorded in *Chunqiu Zuo shi zhuan* (*Commentary of Zuo on the Spring and Autumn Annals*).

⁷ This reference is unclear.

ever be carried out? This is a grave lapse on her part. Go again to the Middle Castle and bring the Princess and Lady Ren back with you.” Ri Yū straightway again mounted his swift horse and raced to the Middle Castle where he immediately put the Princess and Lady Ren under arrest and had them get into a carceral palanquin. Then taking the remaining gem, he hurried back to the palace. The *chūfugimi* was elated to hear the news, and had it rumored about that “Lady Ren hid the gem so that the Princess could all the sooner rule the land.” Even more enraged, the King finally banished the Princess and Lady Ren to a desolate shore east of the foothills of Takamine, and had all who were in service in the Middle Castle, both male and female, either executed or banished. Manazuru, though willing to sacrifice herself to save the Princess, was unable to do anything by herself and reluctantly fled the Middle Castle, sequestering herself in a hovel in Yukisaki near the port of Naha, where she waited for Mō Kokutei’s return. At that time Mō Kokutei had been sent to Little Ryukyu and played no part in this matter, so Ri Yū’s conniving faced no challenges. Though Mō Kokutei knew nothing about what had happened, he was worried about Princess Nei and pressed the boatsmen to hurry, so after only nine days he arrived back in the port of Naha. Manazuru, who had been anxiously awaiting his return, told him all that had transpired. He was stunned by what he heard, and thought, “Ah, Princess Nei is very clever by nature, but she has not been able to escape disaster and had fallen into the trap of evil designers.” Filled with both lament and rage, he thought that he ought to go to where the Princess had been exiled, but after racking his brains he realized that the matter was already settled and there was nothing he could do about it. Stifling his indignation, he went to the palace and reported, “The matter of the Akase stone monument is just as the people said. Thus, I made offerings and conducted rites according to form.” Then he hurried back to his residence in the Middle Castle, where he had his most trusted retainers go to defend the area to which the Princess had been exiled. He also secretly sent Manazuru to supply them with food and raiment so that they would lack nothing. Ri Yū had made several clandestine attempts to have the Princess and her mother killed, but Mō Kokutei had learned of those plans through confidential informers and prevented such plots from being carried out. Thus, two years passed.

In greater Japan at that time it was the reign of Emperor Konoe, and in the second year of Kyūju [1155] Chinzei Hachirō Tametomo had been ordered by Retired Emperor Toba to find the crane that had previously been released. Accompanied only by Half-mile Stone-throwing Kiheiji, he made the distant journey to the kingdom of Ryukyu, where his baggage was stolen by Master

Mōun. When he was climbing Mount Kyūkyū together with Kiheiji, Tametomo tumbled down to the foot of the mountain and was tended by Lady Ren. There he unexpectedly received the crane in exchange for the gem he had obtained from the giant serpent, for which his nurse's son, Sutō Sueshige, had sacrificed his life. Then Tametomo returned to Higo. Kiehiji swam after his departing boat, finally throwing an iron hook to it rather than be left behind. A detailed account of these things appears in chapter six, and does not need to be repeated here. But Princess Nei's background was not included in the earlier chapter. I hope the reader will not find this order of events confusing. Earlier chapters dealt mainly with Tametomo's lineage and thirty years of his accomplishments, but now we return to a more detailed account of Princess Nei. Thus I have included this explanatory note.

Princess Nei and Lady Ren were overjoyed at having obtained the missing gem, and had Manazuru tell Mō Kokutei about it. He was ecstatic to hear the news and rushed to the palace to announce that the Princess had obtained the missing gem in her place of exile. After two years of her absence, King Shō Nei was filled with fond remembrance and his heart softened at hearing this. "In that case, summon the Princess and Lady Ren back." Mō Kokutei gladly accepted the command and made preparations that very evening to bring them back. Early the next morning he led several Junior Pages bearing palanquins to the place of exile and brought the Princess and her mother directly to the Dragon Palace. All along the three-league way it was crowded with guards and throngs of onlookers. Owing to their haste, they arrived at around noon. Receiving news of their approach, King Shō Nei had assembled the Minister of Law, Lords, and Regional Officers to receive Princess Nei and Lady Ren in the Main Hall of the Dragon Palace.

Then Princess Nei presented the gem she had received in exchange for the crane. King Shō Nei placed it on a stand next to the other and examined both of them carefully. Then turning to Ri Yū, he asked, "This looks like the lost gem, but there is no proof. What do you think?" Ri Yū approached and, after inspecting it for some time, said, "To my untrained eye, the shape of the gem that the princess has presented is similar in shape, but seems to have a bluish tint compared to the other one. I think it needs careful appraisal." Then the *chūfugimi*—who until then had not been present—appeared from behind a screen and said to the King, "If your majesty wishes to ascertain the authenticity of this gem, you should ask Master Mōun, who is able to use his exalted wisdom to address the question. He will undoubtedly be able to resolve any doubts." Then after she made obeisance toward distant Takamine, before long Mōun abruptly appeared in

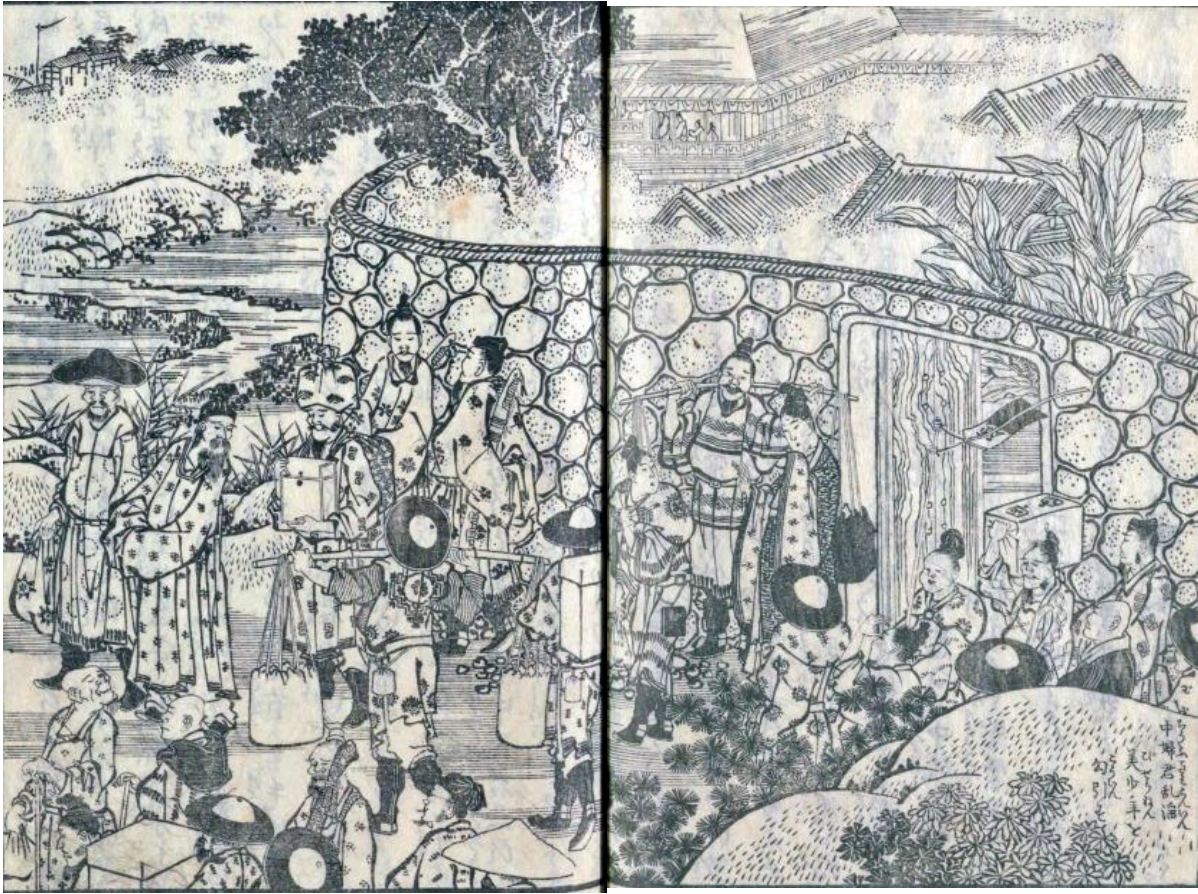


the court, riding on a cloud in the winds. Upon seeing this, the King lit incense and stood up, inviting Mōun to sit next to the throne, then inquired about the authenticity of the gem. Mōun inspected both gems from various angles and then said derisively, “The one that the princess just now brought is undoubtedly a fake. Look, one is pure white, and the other is blue. The one with a bluish tint is from a serpent. One taken from a dragon will not shatter even if pounded, while a gem from a serpent is easy to break. Why not try it?” The King agreed, and had the gem pounded, whereupon it shattered, sending chips flying. Upon seeing this, the King was infuriated, and fumed “The princess has tried to deceive me with a fake! That is an unforgivable offense. Bind her immediately!” The Princess, still prostrated, was left speechless. Lady Ren, attempting to shift the blame to herself, apologized tearfully, “Had we known it was a fake, we would of course never have presented it. But if you still find what we have done despicable, then kill me but spare the Princess.” Showing no reserve, Ri Yū stepped forth from the assembly and proceeded fiercely to take hold of the two women, but Mō Kokutei intervened, glaring at him and saying, “Allow me a word! Though it is the king’s command, stay your hand for a moment

and listen to what everyone has to say. A sagacious king and a wise subject will not treasure precious things, but will only treasure goodness. There being fathers, there are children, and there being sovereigns, there are subjects. The bonds between father and child, husband and wife, and sovereign and subject are called the Three Cardinal Principles.⁸ If these Three Principles are not properly maintained, then the eight virtues of benevolence, righteousness, propriety, wisdom, loyalty, trust, filial piety, and harmony among siblings⁹ will never be realized. If there is hostility between father and child, discord between sovereign and subject, or enmity between husband and wife, then the land will not be governable. If your majesty now begrudges the loss of a gem so much that you condemn your heir apparent, then even if you had the gem, to whom would you transmit it? The fate of the country lies in virtue, not in the maintenance of a gem. If one day insurrectionists should storm the palace, would you fight them and easily defeat them with a gem? In this instance, a sagacious judgment would be for compassion. I beg you to show mercy and forgiveness.” His angry eyes filled with tears, he remonstrated in an elevated voice. Since what he said was reasonable, the King sighed and, turning to Mōun, asked, “The princess is guilty. Should I execute her? Or forgive her?” Straightening the sleeves of his robe, Mōun replied, “The way of father and child is ordained by nature, and an outsider should not interject, whether for good or for ill. Reward or punishment is according to your majesty’s heart. But I will venture to say this: the Princess is your heir apparent, and even if she is guilty of an offense, she should not receive the same punishment as an ordinary subject would. If you choose to abandon affection and adhere to the law, the you should depose the Princess and appoint another heir. As I look closely at the Princess’s physiognomy, I see that she is unusually clever, but of meager virtue, and is not fated to rule over others. And as I look at the physiognomy of the *chūfugimi*, I see that she is both clever and virtuous. Within two or three years, she will conceive and bear a prince. At that time, the missing gem will be restored without even seeking it.” The King was greatly pleased to hear this definitive pronouncement, and summoned Mō Kokutei to come forth. “Though the princess’s crime is very serious, I shall grant special leniency and put her in your charge. Take her back to the Middle Castle and keep her confined there.” Mō Kokutei reverentially accepted this command and helped the weeping Princess and her mother to their

⁸ *Sangang* (J. *sankō*). This teaching first appears in the *Liji* (*Book of Rites*).

⁹ These are the same eight virtues that would later be incorporated in the eight dogs of Bakin’s *Nansō Satomi Hakkenden*.



feet. Still reproaching herself for her carelessness and feeling deeply grateful for her father's gracious leniency, when she thought that this would be the last time she would ever enter the royal palace, it saddened her greatly to leave. And so, led by Mō Kokutei, the Princess and Lady Ren returned to the Middle Castle. Though it was better than their place of exile, everything was different from how it had been. Aside from Manazuru, there were no dependable people in their service, and they pined away both day and night.

From that time forth, the *chūfugimi* secretly colluded with Ri Yū and, putting all their trust in Mōun, told him of all their clandestine plans. They received him with obsequiousness, and though he remained on Takamine, he often flew down to the palace. If there was anything he wanted, he would use his supernatural powers and simply snatch it away, but since he was the King's honored mentor, no one lodge complaints out of fear of retribution. Thus, the virtuous government of the former kings was increasingly abandoned, and there were many who harbored resentment. The *chūfugimi* had previously caused Princess Nei to lose the gem, and had both her and Lady Ren, whom she despised, banished. So when she heard that the missing gem had been

found and that mother and daughter were returning with it, she was very distressed, and began considering various plots. But when the gem turned out to be a fake and the Princess was again convicted of a crime, she thought that the girl's fate was finally sealed, and signaled that to Mōan with her eyes. But though he understood the *chūfugimi*'s intent, he spared both the Princess and Lady Ren, sending them back to the Middle Castle safe and sound. The *chūfugimi* was deeply disappointed, and when no one else was present would grumble to him, "Though you are the Reverend Master, you have allied yourself with Mō Kokutei and sent the Princess and her mother back. Though we had previously asked for your help, you have proven unreliable." Mōn smiled and whispered in reply, "Would I spare those two without a plan in mind? Princess Nei is very intelligent, and her filial devotion has won the praise of the people. If she were put to death right away, the people would grieve her loss, and you would be unfairly blamed for it. If you lose the goodwill of the people, it is impossible to achieve any great undertaking. Though the Princess safely returned to the Middle Castle, until she has been determined as successor to the throne you have nothing to fear. Not only that, but if you conceive and give birth to a prince, then even if the Princess should live to the age of a hundred, Mō Kokutei would not be able to do anything about it. As I said before, you should be able to give birth to a prince, but if the king is feeble, you would only end up barren, which is a pity, is it not? Women remain fertile until they are forty-nine. You are still in your prime, so whether you bear a child or not, it is up to you." The *chūfugimi* nodded in understanding. Then she and Ri Yū earnestly engaged in illicit intercourse attempting to produce a child, but the time passed in vain and she did not become pregnant. Since it appeared that Ri Yū was not fertile, they recruited handsome youths of both high and low estate, putting them up in the consort's quarters where they carried on their licentious activities, outperforming even the lasciviousness of Empress Jia of Jin,¹⁰ and yet King Shō Nei remained unaware of what was going on. Ri Yū's power and authority grew, and he rewarded those who flattered him, whether they had merit or not, and even provided a home near the capital for Kumagimi, who had been banished from the Northern Ravine, providing her with ample support. There are no words to describe such shamefulness.

¹⁰ Jia Nanfeng (257-300), consort to Emperor Hui (259-307) of the Jin dynasty.

Chapter Thirty-Eight

After but one night of conjugal union, a couple remains separated,
Wizardry in a mirror's reflection drives parent and child apart.

As Princess Nei and Lady Ren were spending their days in listless confinement in the Middle Palace, seven years flew by like a swift horse. During that time, the *chūfugimi* and Ri Yū were proceeding unscrupulously with their evil plans, and did not bother themselves with the Princess and her mother. The Princess no longer aspired to the throne, and rather only wished to spend her life in quiet retirement. In both talent and beauty she was without peers, and in spite of her strong filial devotion, she had three times been falsely accused of wrongdoing but had narrowly escaped the ultimate punishment. That owed to the sincere loyalty of Mō Kokutei, and even he was being circumspect, avoiding frequent visits. But once late at night there was a knock at the gate, and Mō Kokutei announced himself. Both the Princess and Lady Ren had missed him sorely, and invited him in. Kneeling down before them, Mō Kokutei could not help noticing the frayed *tatami* and the sooty screens. Spiders had spun their webs across windows as if they owned the place, the threads glistening with drops from the night's rain, and the wicker ceiling was stained from leaks that looked like halos around the moon. As he was about to speak, Mō Kokutei was fighting back tears at seeing the heartrending fate of one who had once been the exalted heir apparent. The Princess had Manazuru bring tea, and asked, "Does some matter of business bring your excellency here late at night?" Sidling closer, Mō Kokutei said in a whisper, "Yes. If I came during daylight hours, it would attract attention, so my surprising you at a time like this is because I have something to tell you in secret. Lady Ren should also hear this. As the daughter of the loyal retainer Lord Shiba (Juntoku), *Myōbu* Manazuru is a younger step-sister to Lady Ren and a maternal relative to you. He trustworthy disposition matches that of both her father and her mother. No one in service at court is her equal, and she deserves much praise for her loyalty and filiality. And yet her aspirations remain hobbled. Thus, acting as matchmaker, I have selected a young man who will be a help to her should something arise. However, if this union were made public, the slanderers would soon become suspicious and things would go poorly for the Princess. With him as husband and her as wife, they would pledge their troth on but one night and vow to share both joys and sorrows for a hundred years, something that only a loyal retainer and a heroine could possibly do. The candidate to become a groom in a marriage

not to his personal advantage is a man named Shōju, a Senior Page who recently came from the countryside. He is from the Tō family in Kuba, a village in the precinct of this Middle Castle. From his childhood he has aspired to mastery of both martial and literary arts, frequenting the palace in order to study. In the autumn of his fifteenth year as he was on the path on Mount Urazoe, he entered a hunter's cabin in order to get out of a sudden downpour, and unexpectedly encountered a vindictive woman who had turned into a poisonous serpent. With one stroke of his sword he killed the beast, and his fame spread through the three provinces. His parents had passed away the previous year and so nothing prevented him from going into court service, where he performed diligently. This year, he would be just past his twentieth year. He has been my disciple in martial arts. I have shared important secrets with him, and he has become an informant, currying favor with the likes of Ri Yū and secretly telling me of their evil designs. Since he is thus a very promising young man, how could he refuse a union for the sake of loyalty? With Shōju working on the outside to prevent the wiles of traitors and Manazuru in court service on the inside, even if the *chūfugimi* again plots to harm the Princess or her mother, there would be a way to thwart that. What do you think of this?" Princess Nei was pleased to



hear this, as was Lady Ren, who said, “Manazuru is my younger sister, but I am like a mother to her. Thus, there would be no better fortune for her than to have your excellency act as a go-between to arrange a good match for her. Don’t you think so, Manazuru?” She turned and looked at her sister, whose face was flushed red and who declined, saying, “How could such a thing be? After all, marriage is something that is done publicly.” One after another, Lady Ren and Kokutei reasoned with her, gently explaining, “This is all for the sake of the Princess, so please, give your consent.” After obtaining Manazuru’s agreement, Mō Kokutei took his leave and early the next morning went to the palace, where he explained the matter to Shōju. Now that the marriage proposal was settled, they used divination to determine an auspicious day. Then covertly bringing Shōju to the Middle Castle, he first met with the Princess and Lady Ren and then the ceremony was performed that evening with Manazuru. They exchanged saké cups and expressed their best wishes, and before they could even spend one night of dreams together, they parted at dawn, never to spend a night with each other again. In the heavens even the oxherd and the weaver girl are able to meet once a year,¹ but for Manazuru and Tō Shōju, their one night together was only the beginning of a parting, never to meet again. But when they considered that it was all for loyal devotion, then even if they were as far apart as Hu and Yue,² their affection for one another was all the greater and they were constantly on each other’s minds. Though more than ten years passed, they had no intimacy with anyone else.

But to turn to a different part of our account, the *chūfugimi*, beguiled by Mōun’s lies, was convinced that she would bear a child and began first of all to have illicit relation with Ri Yū and then, still unsated, kept numerous handsome youths in the women’s quarters of the palace, unconcerned about any censure from the world. If the conditions this created were not like those in the court of Emperor Cheng of Han,³ then it was like Empress Kōmyō’s bathing and scraping the grime from one thousand.⁴ But though she gave full rein to her lust, the years passed

¹ According to a Chinese folk tale, an oxherd and a weaver girl pursued a forbidden romance and were thus banished to opposite sides of the river of heaven (Milky Way), but were allowed to meet one night of the year, on the seventh day of the seventh month when a flock of magpies created a bridge for them.

² Hu and Yue were kingdoms in ancient China, in the far north and far south respectively.

³ 51-7 BCE. His consort, Zhao Hede (d. 7 BCE), had the emperor’s two sons by concubines put to death along with their mothers.

⁴ According to legend, when Empress Kōmyō (701-760), consort to Emperor Shōmu (701-756), was praying, she was told by Buddha to construct a bath and bathe 1,000 sick people.

unabated and after seventeen years her charms began to fade in the autumn of her life as her fortieth year went by and she approached her fiftieth, with no sign of pregnancy.

Now King Shō Nei, well stricken in age and by nature fainthearted, wearied of the people's complains and, leaving matters of government to Mōun and Ri Yū, spent his time with falconry and wandering in the mountains. That year he felt his physical decline more than ever and became uneasy about the future. One day he said to the *chūfugimi*, "Our marriage has unfortunately not been blessed with a son. I am already well beyond sixty, and the Council of Three has remonstrated with me, saying that I must appoint an heir soon. And yet I have no child other than the Princess, who has been confined to the Middle Castle these many years for the crime of losing the gem. But she is over thirty now, and I think the time has come to pardon her. What Mō Kokutei said previously is reasonable. Have it announced that the Princess will be the successor to the throne." Knitting her brows, the *chūfugimi* answered trying to sound credible, "I have been hoping these many years that the Princess would re-enter society, so I am very happy to hear this. Now since last winter I have felt a change within my body, but the court physicians have not been able to determine that I am pregnant. That is perhaps because I bore no child when I was young. But Most Reverend Master Mōun looked at my physiognomy and said that I would give birth to a prince. So I'd like you to ask the master to determine this, and then let it be known among the ministers." The king nodded, and the next day summoned Mōun and assembled Ri Yū and the other courtiers to discuss the matter of a successor. Since the *chūfugimi* and Mōun and already conspired with each other, at her signal with her eyes, he immediately understood her intention and, approaching the throne, said, "That your majesty has not forgotten Princess Nei bespeaks your great compassion. Restoring her to her former status as heir apparent accords with reason, but it would be very bad for the country. The reason is that the *chūfugimi* has conceived and is approaching her last month of pregnancy. My prayers these many years have not been in vain. The prince that is in her womb is the reincarnation of a sage, and that is why her appearance has not changed. Thus, no one could tell that she is with child. The child that will be born is unquestionably a prince, if you do not wait but appoint a successor now, will you not regret it later? Not only that, but if you establish the Princess as heir now, the proper lineage of the Tenson rulers would come to an end. This is very difficult for me to say, but Princess Nei is not your majesty's child, but is actually the secret love child of Mō Kokutei. Since they are cousins, before Lady Ren was brought to the court she was on close terms with Mō Kokutei and

they ended up having an illicit relationship and she soon became pregnant. Then basking in your majesty's affections, she prided herself on having given birth to a royal child. But even if she can deceive everyone under heaven, how could she ever deceive Mōun? And that is why Mō Kokutei so often reproached your majesty, defending the Princess against your intentions to punish her. It was because she is his child that he is trying to have her rule this kingdom. This wicked plot affects more than just the present. It is because your majesty was unaware of this and appointed the Princess as heir that the gods of the land, Kinmanmon, were angered that the spirits of the royal ancestors had been dishonored, and thus visited the land with calamities and took the gem away to prevent this illegitimate succession from happening. From the beginning I perceived that this was the case but had no occasion to say it plainly, and just kept it to myself. But if I were to remain reticent about this today, then terrible things would certainly happen. I beg you to take these things into consideration." At hearing this seemingly truthful lie, the *chūfugimi* put on an appearance of shocked amazement and, exchanging glances with Ri Yū, bewailed, "What strange things we have heard! Who besides the gods would have known that Princess Nei is actually Mō Kokutei's love child? Lady Ren's air of sagacity, Mō Kokutei's pretensions to loyalty ... the human heart is more difficult to fathom than the deepest depths of the sea." Then Ri Yū came forth and addressed Mōun, "Most Reverend Master, it is not that I doubt your discernment, but after the Princess and her mother were put in confinement, Mō Kokutei has not gone to the Middle Castle, perhaps out of fear of creating controversy. If he were scheming to back the Princess as heir, why would he dawdle more than ten years, almost twenty? Why did he not apply such cunning craftiness to lead an insurrection? This is all unclear." Before even hearing him out, Mōun straightened himself with an indignant air, "Such a question is surprising coming from someone of your royal rank. The reason that Mō Kokutei's rebellion has not been evident all these years is because I, you, and others in power have given him pause. And even if he has not yet been able to complete his perfidious designs, ever since Lady Ren was exiled from the palace he has visited her secretly, indulging his lusts, so he has not been in a hurry to bring his plans to their conclusion. His reasoning is that since the king is advanced in age, he would simply wait until you leave the world. When you previously made him the Princess's guardian, and then later left both the Princess and Lady Ren in his charge, that was like giving provisions to a thief. And it is shortsighted to believe that he doesn't go to the Middle Castle because he doesn't want to come under suspicion." Mōun spoke sneeringly, and Ri Yū made a face as if he

were thoroughly scandalized. From the lords all the way down to the yellow-capped officials (*kōbōkan*), all were amazed and in a state of confusion.



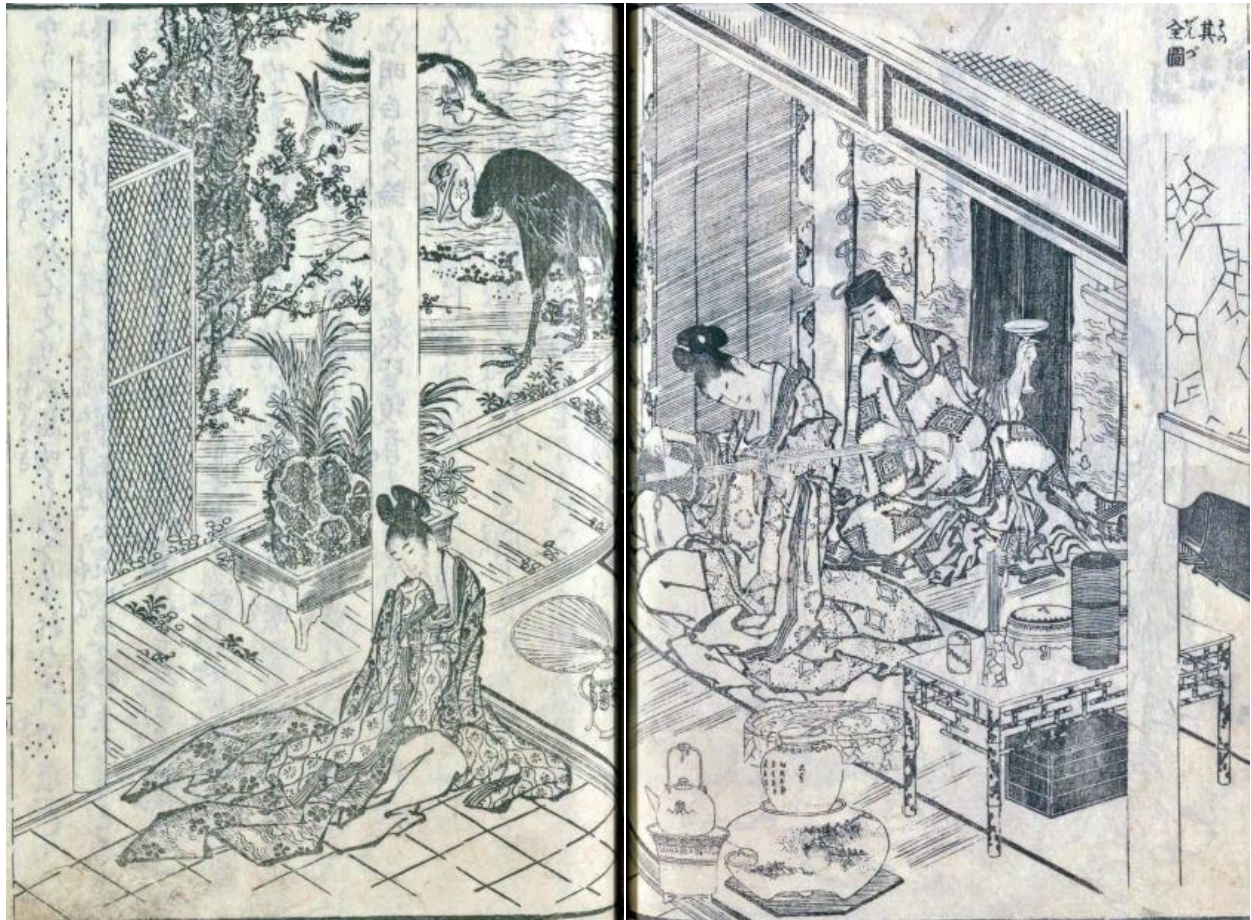
Having listened to these revelations, King Shō Nei remained in stunned silence for a long time, then pressing his hands to his forehead and letting out a sigh, said, “If Lady Ren’s and Mō Kokutei’s secret sins are as the Most Reverend Master has described, then they are of the same magnitude as the five *ānantarya karma* offenses.⁵ But what proof is there that the Princess is Kokutei’s child? As long as there is doubt about a crime, punishment cannot very well be administered.” Mōun replied, “Your majesty’s compassion is such that you will not hastily condemn anyone. Please lend me a mirror, and I’ll show you their adultery, dispersing any doubt.” Nodding the King had a Senior Page bring a large mirror and set it up on the direction of the Middle

Castle, mounting it on a pillar. Without haste, Mōun arose and, walking up to the mirror, said, “Using the technique of the ‘thousand league eye,’ I shall now show you their hidden misdeeds. This is equal to the all-seeing glass mirror in the court of King Enma in the underworld. Please, look carefully at this.” Then facing the mirror he uttered three prayers. As everyone looked on, the surface of the mirror brightened like the rising of the full moon, and the inner rooms of the dilapidated Middle Castle appeared one at a time just as they once were. The time was the beginning of the ninth month. In the warmth of the south seas, hibiscuses were blooming and exotic birds were perched on branches chirping melodiously. Plum blossoms exuded their

⁵ J. *gogyaku*; i.e., matricide, patricide, killing and *arhat* (one who has been enlightened), wounding a *tathagata* (“thus-come-one,” one who is beyond all transitory phenomena), or creating schism in the *sangha* (assembly of monks/nuns).

fragrance while mixed among the Judas trees the buds on the rosewoods were awaiting the winter. Birds of all variety visited the autumnal garden to forage for seeds, and there was a paper kite that had fallen. It was a typical scene for the season. The only visitors were the sounds of the wind through the pines by the eaves and of water rushing through the bamboo conduit. In this lonesome dwelling Manazuru was serving saké to Mō Kokutei, who passed the cup on to Lady Ren. Appearing quite inebriated, Lady Ren picked up her snake-skin *jabisen* and, strumming it, sang in a melodious voice,

*Ito yanagi / kokoroku ni / arashiyaba / noyoteharamono / kazeniteri yo ka*⁶



Kokutei then dozed off, pillowing his head in Lady Ren's lap. This scene appeared as if happening before his very eyes, and King Shō Nei stared at it without batting an eye. Burning with indignation, his breathing grew rough. Both stunned and angered, he was beside himself. Then facing downward he tumbled off the throne, hitting his back and leaving him unable to get

⁶ Bakin includes a lengthy note explaining that this song appears in Ogyū Sorai's (1666-1728) *Ryūkyū heishiki* (*Account of the Ryukyuan Envoys*) (1710), and notes that he found the words only partially comprehensible.

up. Ri Yū and the others rushed forth to help him up. Finally getting his eyes and mouth in tandem and wiping the slaver from his mouth, he look to the right and to the left and, heaving a deep sigh, raged in a loud voice, “I’ve been a fool to have let myself be taken in by a villainous woman and a traitorous subject, unaware these thirty years that Princess Nei was that rogue’s love child. And to think that they attempted to steal the royal lineage! Ri Yū, immediately assemble a force and head to the Middle Castle. Behead both Lady Ren and Mō Kokutei—and Princess Nei too—and then show me their heads!” The wise among those present suspected that Mōun had used sorcery to produce an unreal image to deceive the King, but fearing his authority they did not dare reason with him, and only bowed their heads and said, “Mō Kokutei is only one person, so sending a large force to take him would create a lot of excitement along the way. It would be better to handle this quietly, summoning him here and interrogating him about the facts of the matter.” Agreeing with them, the King asked, “Whom, then, should I send to summon him?” Ri Yū proposed, “Senior Page Tō Shōju is bold in spirit and adept at things. He was Mō Kokutei’s disciple in martial arts, but apparently despising his teacher’s perfidy, has been estranged for a long time and often visits my house. Also, Assistant Captain Sa Kokukitsu, the cousin of Kokutei’s wife, Niigaki, has reason to resent Kokutei, as he has secretly confided to both me and Shōju. If you let these two in on the strategy and sent them to the Middle Castle, Mō Kokutei won’t suspect a thing and will come.” Then King Shō Nei ordered, “In that case, convey the secret royal command to Shōju and Sa Kokukitsu.” Ri Yū then summoned those two to a private room and, communicating to them the substance of the command, added, “If Mō Kokutei has left the Middle Castle, then both of you should withdraw on some pretext. Then Shōju, you rush in and slay the Princess and Lady Ren and come back with their heads. Sa Kokukitsu, you go straightway to Mō Kokutei’s house and apprehend his wife, Niigaki, and his children. I’ll send reinforcements through a shortcut. This is a lifetime opportunity to show your loyalty. Set out immediately!” Without hesitation both Shōju and Sa Kokukitsu complied and, accompanied by only a few men, left on horseback through the main gate. Riding side by side and seeing that they were well ahead of their followers, Shōju sighed and, calling Sa Kokukitsu to a halt, asked him in a whisper, “What do you think? The King has long been under the sway of Mōun’s sorcery, providing an opportunity for the wiles of such sycophants as the *chūfugimi*. The three bonds of sovereign-subject, parent-child, and husband-wife are being set in disorder. They are trying to kill the Princess and harm a loyal subject, and there is no telling when the kingdom will

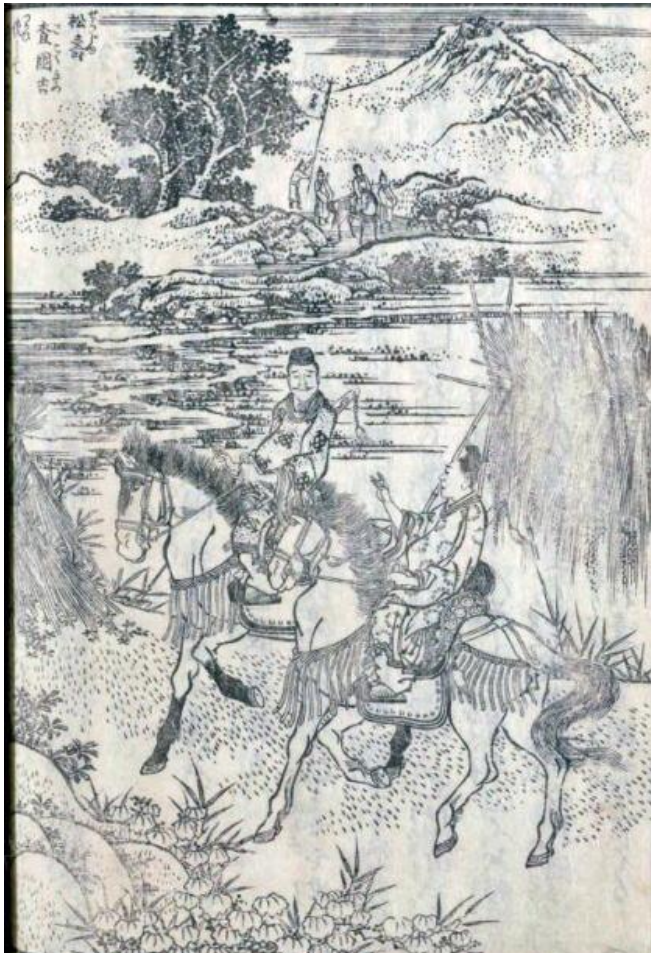
collapse. We are only low-ranking officials with meager stipends, and there's nothing we can do to save the situation. We're just Ri Yū's pawns, and though we're not crazy we're obliged to act like madmen. Our lot is unbearable, isn't it?" Sa Kokukitsu replied courageously, "I think that you and I should work together in order immediately to inform Mō Kokutei about the collusion between Mōun and Ri Yū. And then together we should barricade ourselves in the Middle Castle, lure the assailants in, and die in battle before the very eyes of the Princess and Lady Ren." Shōju nodded in agreement and then, after waiting for their followers to catch up with them, galloped off toward the Middle Castle.

Chapter Thirty-Nine

On Mount Urazoi, Kokutei meets the messengers,
In the Chūzan Palace, Ri Yū slays the loyal retainer.

Still unaware of the nefarious plot of Ri Yū and his party, Mō Kokutei was in high spirits, having learned that morning through a secret communication from Tō Shōju that the King intended to name the Princess as his successor and have Mōun and Ri Yū assume administrative authority. In order to ascertain the truthfulness of this report and then have Manazuru convey it to the Princess and Lady Ren, he was on his way to the royal palace. On the foothills of Mount Urazoi, which lies between the Middle Castle and the royal palace, he ran into the two messengers.

Seeing Mō Kokutei approach from a distance, Shōju and Sa Kokukitsu cried out in a loud voice, “Lord Mō, we have been sent with a royal command.” Kokutei quickly dismounted and waited by the side of the road. Having drawn near, the messengers remained in their saddles,



assuming dignified postures, and announced, “We bear the King’s command. The Princess and Lady Ren are to be summoned back and the Princess is to be restored to her position as heir apparent. Accordingly, the King is assembling all ministers and lords to discuss the matter. You are to make haste and go to the palace.” Respectfully receiving the command, Mō Kokutei said, “I did not know that I was to be summoned, but I was just now on my way to the palace and am fortunate to have met you here. Please accompany me there.” Seeing that he was earnest and beaming with a smile, Shōju and Sa Kokukitsu felt very uneasy and wanted to inform him of Ri Yū’s plot, but

hesitated lest they be overheard by their men, and said, “No, we must go directly to the Middle Castle and tell the Princess and Lady Ren, so we shall not be able to return with you.” “In that case, I’ll take my leave,” Kokutei replied and, nimbly remounting his horse, set out. He had gone about six hundred yards when Shōju and Sa Kokukitsu rushed up behind him, whipping their steeds and yelling, “Lord Mō, come back for a moment. We have something else to tell you.” Kokutei reined in his horse and went up to them. All three of them had left their men behind. The two young messengers used the occasion to whisper to Kokutei the details of Mōun’s sorcery with the mirror and of the *chūfugimi*’s and Ri Yū’s plotting. Then they added with an earnest note, “Since things have taken this turn, if you go to the palace you will immediately be beheaded. Turn back and barricade yourself in the Middle Castle. Assemble some loyal men, destroy Mōun and Ri Yū, and return the Princess to her rightful place in society. We shall be working on the outside to formulate a counter strategy so that we appear to be defeating insurgents. We should be able to accomplish this right away. Please don’t delay.” But Mō Kokutei shook his head and answered, “you called me back so that you could warn me of the danger without your men overhearing, hoping that the deities of the land will take pity and the way of righteousness preserved. But even if for the sake of an innocent person, if I were to barricade myself in the Middle Castle and fight the assailants, I would be setting the Princess against her father and I, as a subject, would be placing myself above my sovereign. Then rather than being a defender of the innocent, I would be a criminal, guilty of treason. There is a proverb: ‘Better to be a loyal retainer’s dog than a human involved in rebellion.’ Today is the day I shall die. If you two are still of loyal intent, then secretly help the Princess and Lady Ren to escape. Then if you still have time, warn my wife and children of the danger, and help them avoid calamity. My oldest son, Tsuru, is fourteen, and his brother, Kame, is twelve, so they know enough to be able to help. Tell them that their father understands and sympathizes with their plight of lone loyalty with no support, but for the sake of Princess Nei, they should be prepared to sacrifice their lives if necessary.” He showed no sign of turning back, and the men from both sides, out of breath, were catching up with them, precluding any further warning from Shōju and Sa Kokukitsu. Mō Kokutei galloped off toward the palace. Gazing at him, Sa Kokukitsu whispered to Tō Shōju, “Lord Mō is truly a peerless loyal retainer. I’m a relative of his wife, and am greatly indebted to him. Even at the expense of my life I must save his sons, Tsuru and Kame. You hurry to the Middle Castle and help the Princess and Lady Ren escape, and see them

to a hiding place.” With a smile, Shōju replied, “That’s as it should be for you. I don’t wish to be driven by reckless courage and rashly give up my life. I’ll save those who can be saved, and leave those who cannot be saved to perish. What merit is there in simply sacrificing oneself? That’s like piling wood on a fire to put it out, or using hot water to cool what’s boiling. You would only end up flustered and become a laughingstock.” Before even hearing him out, Sa Kokukitsu became furious and raged, “It seems you’re so afraid to die that you’d rather just sit on the fence. That makes me worried about the Princess, but there’s only one of me and I can’t pull off both rescues by myself. You and I should have it out, right here and now!” He appeared ready to attack Shōju, who showed not the least sign of agitation, but explained with a smile, “How can a Captain be so imprudent? You are attempting to answer favor with courage. I am carrying out loyalty by means of wisdom. If we don’t use appropriate means to respond to the occasion, it will be impossible to outwit Mōun and Ri Yū and save the Princess. This is not the place to argue about secret plans. And if you and I have it out with each other here, what would be the good of that?” The look on Sa Kokukitsu’s face softened, and just as he was answering, “Yes, that’s true,” the men caught up with them. Then they hurried on their way down a shortcut between Miri and Urazoi at such a speed that they soon again left their men behind.

At that time, Lord Mō Kokutei, valuing his loyalty but not his life and sensing that his inevitable fate was approaching, made haste on the path to death accompanied by the cry of the cuckoo. In this bitter world where he was forced to bear false accusation without being able to defend himself and where loyalty is cast as disloyalty and injustice, he could only wish that his spirit would remain and that it might destroy the evildoers and restore the Princess to her position in society. With a clear conscience he pulled on the reins of his dapple-grey horse as he came to the palace. Dismounting at the main gate, he proceeded toward the familiar main hall. No sooner had he entered than numerous junior pages rushed forth from behind curtains where they had been lying in wait, their spears flashing from all sides. One pierced him through his side. He gripped it to stop the thrust, but was unable to finish reciting his death poem

Tsubote aru hana no tsuyu nomi mayata goto kenaba ya tatero somonaore kana

Like a drop of dew on a budding flower—

should it vanish, what remains of its luster? Such is human life.¹

¹ This verse was apparently taken from Morishima Chūryō’s (1756-1810) *Ryūkyūdan*, published fifteen years before Bakin’s work. This translation follows Bakin’s interpretations, which is spelled out in much of the remainder of this



before another soldier behind him rushed forth with sword drawn and in a flash cut off his head. Ah, how heartbreaking! Mō Kokutei's loyalty and righteousness was in no way inferior to that of the ancients. He was valorous and skilled in tactics. He would boldly remonstrate with his sovereign and not hesitate to take down flatterers. Several times he saved the Princess and Lady Ren from danger and was willing to take upon himself responsibility for the preservation of the land, but was ignored by his unenlightened sovereign. The slander against him continued, and he was executed. This was a day of great sorrow in which gods and demons wept.

The junior pages presented Mō Kokutei's head to Ri Yū, who placed it on a silver plate and, showing it to the assembled courtiers, said, "The traitor Kokutei's conspiracy has been completely exposed, and he has now been disposed of. Tō Shōju has been charged with taking the Princess, Lady Ren, and Manazuru, while Sa Kokukitsu will arrest Kokutei's wife and children. Then his majesty's mind can be at ease. Let us celebrate!" Then he showed the head to

paragraph and which is omitted here. He concludes the paragraph with: "The words express contemplation of transitoriness and strike a balanced tone. It is admirable that it is set in thirty-one syllables." (They typical Ryukyuan pattern was 8-8-8-6 syllables.)

them one at a time, whereupon the Council of Three were aghast, yet eager to curry favor and said, “Now that the traitor was destroyed on the spot, our land will be even more at peace. There can be no greater occasion for joy.” Then King Shō Nei addressed Mōun, commanding him, “Reverend Master, you said previously that the *chūfugimi* is with child. When will she give birth? Tell me in certain terms.” After pondering for some time and counting on his fingers, Mōun replied, “If soon, it will be within this month, but even if it’s late, it will be within forty or fifty days. Since the child will be a prince, it will be a cause for great celebration.” The king was ecstatic, and said in a cordial tone, “Then from now on offer prayers for the wellbeing of mother and child.” Mōun replied, “I have already long been offering prayers for a safe delivery. But what remains is the disposal of the Princess and Lady Ren. Tō Shōju is a reliable young man, but I worry that it has been left to him alone. You should hasten to have Ri Yū send some reinforcements to help Shōju slay them.” King Shō Nei nodded in agreement. Ri Yū gladly took on the assignment and, without returning home, donned his armor and sped out on his horse. His junior pages, eager not to be left behind, quickly grabbed their armaments and gasped for breath as they followed him.

Chapter Forty

Tearfully, Shōju slays Lady Ren,
The spirit of Shiranui comes to the aid of Princess Nei.

Having seen Mō Kokutei off at the foothills of Mount Urazoi, Senior Page Tō Shōju and Assistant Captain Sa Kokukitsu were racing their horses making them foam at the mouth until they reached the Middle Castle, leaving their men far behind. The reinforcements had not yet arrived. Taking advantage of that, Sa Kokukitsu hurried off to Mō Kokutei's house. Dismounting at the rear gate of the Middle Castle, Shōju stealthily entered and, without announcing himself, went around a grove of trees in the garden and proceeded further into the palace. Beneath the eaves of the Keikan Hall, Princess Nei and Lady Ren, attended only by Manazuru, were gazing at the blossoms on a Judas tree. It was a dismal scene. Then they looked out and said, "Look! Why has Shōju come?" Then he prostrated himself before the balustrade, saying nothing by only weeping. Suspecting that something inauspicious had happened, lady Ren called for him to come near, saying, "Well, Tō Shōju, this is unusual! Since the one night you and Manazuru spent together when you were married, many years have passed, and the Princess and I had forgotten what you looked like. But it seems that Manazuru, having yearned for her husband all these years, recognized your footsteps. I'm uneasy about what might have brought you here in such a hurried state. What are things like in the capital? Is the King at peace?" Gradually lifting his head, Shōju said, "Traitors are rampant at court, and the world is coming to an end." Then he told them in detail, from beginning to end, about Mōun's trick with the mirror and the claim that the Princess was Lady Ren's and Mō Kokutei's child, about how he and Sa Kokukitsu had been commanded to summon Kokutei and had run into him near Mount Urazoi, about how they had warned him about Ri Yū's plot and told him to turn back, but how he chose death instead and proceeded to the palace. "Sa Kokukitsu went to Mō Kokutei's house to save his wife and children. Neither Ri Yū nor Mōun—in spite of all his sorcery—has any idea that we are Lord Mō's spies, and commanded us, saying 'Hurry directly to the Middle Castle and take the heads of the Princess and Lady ren. We'll send reinforcements by a shortcut.' Before anyone finds out, come with me to a safe place. Come on!" He urged them to hurry, but Lady Ren, exchanging glances with the Princess and Manazuru, remained in stunned silence for a time, then wiping the tears streaming down her face said, "Ah, what use has my life been in this world? Abandoned by

the gods of Heaven and Earth, falsely accused, and his majesty does not perceive the *chūfugimi*'s perfidy.¹ I cannot understand why her father, the King, could say that the Princess is not his child and command that she be killed. Since this is my inescapable fate, let my life end under the blade, and may the blood remind the King of the blood I shed when giving birth, and let it be a testament of the sincerity of my heart. Shōju and Manazuru, do what you can to save the Princess.” Then she raised her voice in wailing. Though what her mother said sounded reasonable, the Princess could not say that it was. Attempting in various ways to console her, with tears in her eyes the Princess said, “How could I let you die alone, mother? It would be the height of unfiliality for me to escape and hide without defending your innocence. We must all have the same determination Mō Kokutei showed when he went to the palace resolved to die. Please do not grieve. I am prepared to die too.” She showed no sign of trepidation. Signaling to Manazuru with his eyes, Shōju raised his voice, “That’s all very wise of you, and it is the view of women. But do you think that death is the way to show filial piety? Destroying traitors and saving the people is a royal’s way to exercise filial piety. But a large number of assailants will be coming, so how are you to escape?” He considered helping them exit through the rear gate, but in their present guise, that would not do. After giving it more thought, he said, “It so happens that there is a perfect chance. Today in Kubagatake they’re holding the mountain deity festival, and people from the villages of Kuba, Atsuta, Taema, Ijū, and Shimafukuro dress in all kinds of costumes and wind their way up close to the palace. I saw them a while ago. I’ll assist Lady Ren, and Manazuru can assist Princess Nei. Let’s hurry.” Taking hanging baskets of flowers down from the eaves, they had Lady Ren carry those, then they retrieved a lion costume from the mausoleum of former kings and used it to disguise the Princess. Then the four of them went out into the street to join the revelry.

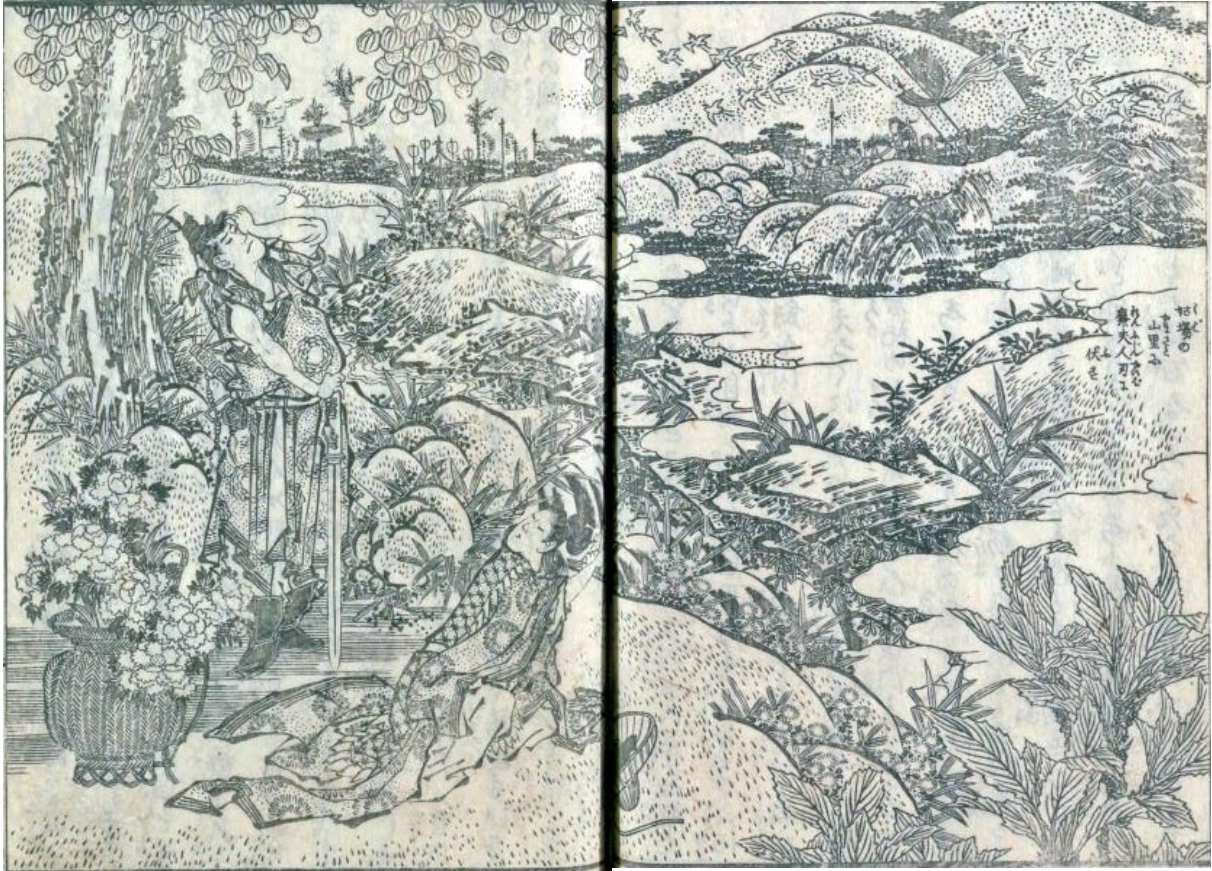
Now the music and acting accompanying dancing in the kingdom of Ryukyu are varied, and some employing elegant modes are permitted only at court.² Then there are sedge hat dances, as well as garland dances, lion dog dances, martial dances, ball dances, and lance dances. The garland dance features three small children with flower wreaths on their heads and wearing brocade waistcoats. They dance carrying baskets of flowers on their shoulders. Lady Ren disguised herself as one of these. In the ball dance, two small children wearing five-colored outer

¹ This sentence includes several puns.

² Here Bakin lists eight such modes.

garments dance lined up on the right and the left carrying golden balls on long red cords with small bells attached on four sides, and while dancing attempt to drive two wooden lion dogs mad. It is accompanied by various types of music, and is very amusing. The Princess and Manazuru disguised themselves as dancing children. There is also a pole dance, a sort of rural entertainment. And there are fan pieces and clapping pieces, performed by prostitutes dressed as men. All of these are part of every festival in each *magiri*.

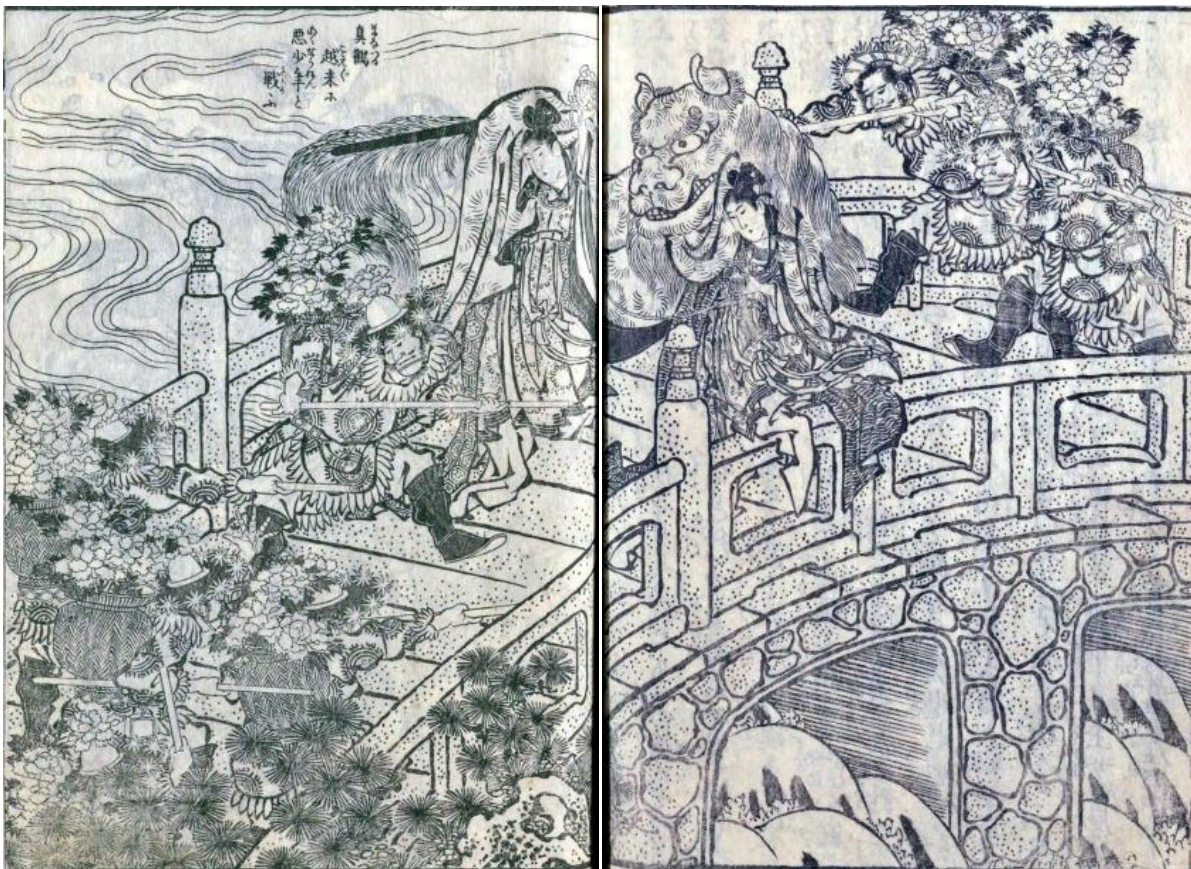
Now Lady Ren had parted from the Princess and Manazuru and, accompanied by Tō Shōju, was escaping toward Kuba when from the direction of Nodaka a force of two or three hundred mounted soldiers advance with a battle cry, their horses kicking up a dust storm. Greatly alarmed to see this, he hardly had time to say, “An army of assailants is approaching, hurry!” before the din of conch shells and gongs arose from the ravine next to Kuba by those lying in wait. Shōju hesitated, unsure what to do with enemies on all sides making advance or retreat impossible. Seeing the situation, Lady Ren determined that the time had come and, sitting beneath a tree, said, “Shōju, with so many assailants pressing close, I’m very worried about the Princess. I want you to cut off my head and show it to the leader of the forces. That way, one flank of the surrounding troops would disperse, leaving the Princess a way to escape. Quick, this is no time to hesitate!” Then she stretched out her snow white neck and pressed her palms together as if to say “Strike here!” Her life seemed more fragile than the flowers in her basket. Though Shōju muttered his assent, he could not bring himself to strike, unsure if it was all a dream or reality. Wasn’t Kinmanmon the protector of filial daughters and chaste women? Shouldn’t I rather fight with all I’ve got even if my head ends up being taken by the enemy? Should I strike her just to win their plaudits? But then, what if Princess Nei is also slain? With such thoughts he went back and forth in his mind, agonizing and unable to come to a resolution. Looking back at him, Lady Ren urge him on. “How fainthearted! What are you waiting for? If out of pity for me you do not strike and the Princess ends up being slain, could you call that loyalty or integrity? If you are too late in doing this, regret will be of no use. Hurry!” Seeing the approach of the troops and knowing that escape was impossible—and asking himself what “loyalty” could mean to a fish caught in a net—he drew his sword. Only forty-six years old, she would not see cherry blossoms in her old age. But she felt even greater anguish than he, and



again urged him, “When the Princess went out the back gate disguised as a festival dancer, she knew that it was our final parting, and I imagine it was very painful for her. Don’t make me recall all of that. Hurry and strike!” Urged once more, Shōju raised his benumbed arm and the blade fell with a thud that echoed in his heart along with the alarm gong of the advancing troops. Lady Ren lay at his feet. Weeping bitterly he picked up her head and, tearing a sleeve off her robe, wrapped it up along with his tears. Then he ran out from under the tree toward the advancing forces. Ri Yū was sitting on a camp stool surrounded by numerous junior pages, and he summoned Shōju to come forward. With Lady Ren’s head in his left hand, he knelt respectfully and reported, “I arrived alone at the Middle Castle ahead of the others, where I slew Lady Ren in the garden and took her head. Just then, Princess Nei escaped out the back gate along with Manazuru, so I went out to look for them. I heard that you were leading the punitive forces, and so I came to make a report and to present the head of Lady Ren for your examination. I think that the Princess is probably far from here by now. If you will break your encirclement and allow me to take charge of those soldiers, I shall track her down immediately.” He managed to sound sincere as he presented the head. Ri Yū had a junior page receive it and, after giving it a

perfunctory examination, had it sent to the palace. Then addressing Shōju, he said, “Though Lady Ren has been slain, until I see the head of the Princess, I cannot carelessly break this encirclement. Someone informed by previously that the Princess has joined a group of festival dancers in disguise. I’ve enlisted some local ruffians to find out her whereabouts. I’ll remain here for a while and wait for a report from Sa Kokukitsu. You take every care to track down the Princess and slay her.” Having received those detailed commands, Shōju took his leave and hurried off toward Kuba.

At that time, accompanied by Manazuru, Princess Nei was disguised in a lion dog costume and was participating in the ball dance, mingling with the local children making their way to the north of Kubagatake. At the same time, the local ruffians had donned brocade short coats and with flowered sedge hats on their heads had scattered about surrounding the revelers. They had been commanded by Ri Yū: “Princess Nei is disguised as the child of the Lion Dog King. Arrest her and bind her. You’ll get whatever you ask as a reward.” In order not to miss their chance, they joined in the garland dance and, playing the part of big brother to the dancing children, led the way. Then saying “Lend me that lion dog costume,” they brandished their gilded



poles, hitting them. Manazuru went in front of Princess Nei to protect her from the blows which came in ever more crazed succession. In the ensuing riot, the giant peony that was part of the lion dog dance was smashed to pieces. Hit directly on the forehead, the lion dog mask split, exposing half of Manazuru's face. Standing in their way, Manazuru laughed derisively, saying, "If you're thinking of taking the Princess, this maggot inside the lion dog will show you how good she is at the sword dance. Don't lose your precious lives!" The ruffians were infuriated at being mocked by a woman and rose up, saying, "You'll eat those words! Take her down, everyone!" as they brandished their poles. She drew her sword and, cutting left and right, challenged them and fought, wounding three and cutting down two. But not made of either steel or stone, she took a hit on her shoulder and dislocated an arm, rendering her unable to withstand their numbers. She stumbled, falling down on a tree stump. The ruffians, thinking "Now we've got her," took up their poles again and began beating her mercilessly. Ah, how pitiful! Manazuru's flesh was torn, her bones broken, and finally that night she entered the shadows of the Mountain of Death.

Seeing the situation and realizing that there was no escape, even as she shed tears for Manazuru's demise Princess Nei rushed forward alone, grabbing one of the ruffians by his topknot and throwing him down. But then another grabbed the sword that remained in Manazuru's hand and thrust it in front of the Princess. Just at that moment when it seemed that all was lost, a fox fire descended from the sky and entered the Princess's breast. She stood up, grabbed the sword away from the miscreant and forthwith cut off the heads of two of their numbers. Then she stood looking threateningly at the rest. Her beautiful brows stood above glowering eyes that would make an army of a million lose heart. Greatly alarmed, the remaining men said, "This is strange! The Princess must be possessed or deranged. Are you a demon? Or a fox? Identify yourself!" Before they could even finish asking, the princess wiped the blood off the blade and, taking the sword in her left hand, said menacingly, "There's no name that I need to announce to a traitorous rabble on a south sea island, but if any of you remain alive, you can bear this in mind and pass it on to future generations. I am the wife of Lord Chinzei Hachirō Minamoto no Tametomo, the eighth son of the Rokujō Police Lieutenant Tameyoshi and ninth generation descendant of Emperor Seiwa of Japan. I am the spirit of Shiranui, daughter of Aso no Shirō Taira no Tadakuni of the province of Higo. Recently when I was crossing the sea with my husband we ran into a tempest and I sank in the waters, but my spirit has been roaming this kingdom of Ryukyu as I have long been waiting for him. Long ago Princess Nei met my husband Hachirō and thus has a



karmic bond with him. Therefore for a time I shall borrow her body and, in communion with my husband and children, shall assist in the work of restoring order to this kingdom. Thus I am—but am not—the Princess. I am—but am not—Shiranui. I am the combination of a filial daughter and a devoted wife. At times I'll be the Princess and at times I'll be Shiranui. If I do not now avenge the death of Manazuru, who could ever say that I was faithful? Do not move from where you are!" Then rising up like a bird in flight, she descended on those standing in front, dismembering them in a flash. Scared witless, the remaining ruffians tried to flee but were pulled from behind, tumbling down, and when they tried to get up, they were struck by the sword, either losing their hands or having a leg severed at the knee. Any who survived were heavily wounded. It was growing dark making it easy for the Princess to conceal herself. She took the sedge hat from one of the men and put it on. Then with a pole in her hand she hurried off as if to catch up with the returning festival dancers. Cutting a very gallant figure as she was led by the spirit of the peerless Shiranui, she ascended the peak of Ontagatake. In Japan, it was the reign of the eightieth emperor, Takakura, the second day of the ninth month of Angen 2 [1176].

Chapter Forty-One

Under moonlight, Shōju buries his wife's remains,
Manazuru substitutes her head for that of her mistress.

As Lady Ren, having parted from Princess Nei, was accompanied by Senior Page Shōju and was fleeing toward Kuba, when an army of assailants came surging toward them, leaving them no way to escape. Unconcerned about what might happen to her and thinking only of a way to break the encirclement to allow the Princess to flee, she at once ended her life. Having no other choice, Shōju took her head to Ri Yū's encampment, planning to persuade him to end the blockade, but Ri Yū, suspicious as ever, refused to turn any troops away. He remained stationed near Nodake, but ordered some local ruffians to scout out the Princess's whereabouts. Thus, for Shōju time was of the essence. Careful not to let his anxiety show, he again asked for permission to go find the Princess, and then headed back toward Kuba, hoping by chance to meet with her and inform her of the situation. If escape proved possible, then they would escape together, but if not, he would fight with all his strength. And if he were forced to be her guide on the Path of Death, then he was resigned to that fate. With an anxious heart he reached the outskirts of Aseri Village, at some point he passed Ike, and then going over fields and hills toward Koegu¹ he came upon a scene of many seriously wounded men, some being born away on shoulders, others on door boards. Seeing this, Shōju thought it very strange and, addressing an old man who looked like a village chieftain, asked what had happened. He replied, "I'm from Kuba. A number of our young men who went to the Ubusuna Festival were unexpectedly ordered by the overseer of Haebara (Ri Yū) to arrest Princess Nei, offering them generous rewards if they were successful. And so, many of them colluded to catch up with the Princess and her attendant on the stone bridge at Koegu, where they beat her attendant to death. But the Princess was then possessed by some mysterious deity—I don't know which—and taking up arms, fought with the strength of a hundred men, like a starving tiger attacking a flock of sheep. Some were mowed down, one dressed like an oxherd boy, another in the guise of a drummer, cut in half. Others were split open as if they had been dry stalks of bamboo. Few survived. My own beloved son, too, perhaps as recompense for so often making his parents worry, was stabbed in the chest. He did not die, but

¹ These phrases include many word plays on the names of places.

told us what happened in a voice as weak as the buzzing of an insect. These fields that are so familiar to me, today seem utterly foreign. Unaware of a parent's tender love for him, only sixteen years of age, under the moon of the sixteenth night my son let craving for lucre get the best of him and got involved with wretched ruffians.² But now it's too late for regret, and his old man is left to bear the weight of it all. What is a parent to do if a child dies a shameful death?" Then he wailed mournfully and other joined in a chorus of weeping as they headed homeward.

Seeing them go, Shōju realized that Manazuru must have been slain. But where could the Princess be? Beside himself with worry he dashed off on the road toward the stone bridge at Koegu just as the sun was setting. A faint moon soon appeared. On this side of the bridge there was much blood on the ground, and he was loathe to step on it. How pitiful! There lay Manazuru, face down at the base of the bridge, no part of her body left unwounded. Shōju immediately choked up at the sight, but soon descended the stone slopes to where she was. He lacked the strength to lift her up. Even a warrior who could fend off a multitude of enemies could not but be moved with tender feelings at such a time. Wiping his tears that fell like rain, he looked around to see only bats flying about. There was no one to overhear him, but he nevertheless lowered his voice. "Manazuru, if your spirit still lingers near, please hear what I have to say. All living things exist as couples, throughout their lives sharing both peace and danger, pleasure and pain, vowing to be together until the end. Who could think otherwise? But we were bound by a bond of loyalty to others, and were man and wife in name only, waking each morning of the quickly passing years alone, like the copper pheasant,³ longing for each other but unable to express that longing, told to be models of loyalty. Determined to do so, we thought that perhaps if the gods had pity on us we could one day be together. But the pheasant is stuck by the hunter's arrow and the deer is caught in the snare. Life is such a fleeting thing." Mumbling through running snivel, after some time it occurred to him that idle complaint and lament would not bring his wife back. Through the protection of Kinmanmon, the Princess had escaped the jaws of death, and unless that fact remained hidden, the likes of the *chūfugimi* and Ri Yū would only resort to greater scheming, searching every nook and cranny until they find her. Fortunately, Manazuru was born in the same year as the Princess and, being the younger sister of Lady Ren,

² This sentence contains numerous word plays.

³ Pairs of copper pheasants (*yamadori*) were thought to spend each night separately on opposite sides of a mountain.



bore a strong resemblance to her. If Manazuru's head were now offered in place of Princess Nei's to deceive Ri Yū, then even in death she could show her loyalty and it would be an incomparable merit for her. But being as sly as he was, would Ri Yū be taken in by such a ruse? Even if he could be deceived, what about Mōun, who possessed the sorcery to see event a thousand leagues away? In that case, Princess Nei could never completely escape. But nothing would come of thinking too deeply about all of that. Sometimes putting one's life on the line leads to success. If it does not work, so be it. If Ri Yū escaped him, he would cut down Mōun. Then intoning prayers to Kinmanmon, to the mountain god of Aorigadake, and to various other deities that the eyes of Ri Yū and Mōun might be clouded and that they would see the head of his wife as that of the Princess, he cut off Manazuru's head and wrapped it in her brocade sleeve. He gave her a water burial, pushing her corpse into the flowing river and vowing to be together in the next life. Then he headed for the encampment at Nodaka.

Ri Yū was still encamped in Nodaka, cautious about making any moves. He had heard of the attempt by the ruffians to capture Princess Nei on the bridge at Koegu, and how it had ended

with their sustaining serious wounds. He was dumbfounded and was just discussing with other the organization of search parties again to capture the Princess when Senior Page Shōju returned. Shōju announced, “Between Teriya and Aketa, satellite villages to Koegu, I unexpectedly caught up with the Princess. Perhaps she was possessed by some malevolent deity, but unlike her usual self she appeared very fierce. She stood with her sword drawn, then looking straight ahead charged at me, slashing and fighting aggressively. We engaged each other for some time until she started to lose strength, and just as she gave up and tried to flee I cut her down and then took her head. Since she was possessed and deranged, I was not able to take her alive, which I deeply regret.” He made his report with a note of pride as he took out Manazuru’s head. If Ri Yū had a discerning eye and said “This is a fake!” the matter would not end with that, so Shōju had prepared himself for any outcome. He came forward and said, “Your excellency, please examine it.” Extremely pleased, Ri Yū had torches brought near in order to inspect it. Since it was Shōju who had previously presented Lady Ren’s head, he had no doubts whatsoever. With a boisterous laugh he said, “Truly, this is unmistakably Princess Nei. You have singlehandedly performed a very meritorious deed, and I greatly admire that. When I return to the palace and report this, you will surely be given honorable recognition. The *chūfugimi* is no doubt anxiously waiting. Let’s go!” Then mobilizing the troops, they set out toward the capital, their way illumined by countless torches, and arrived around daybreak. Shōju was very anxious. He had easily deceived Ri Yū. Manazuru did indeed resemble the Princess, but if they stood side-by-side slight differences would be noticeable. Shōju was fortunate that Ri Yū had harbored no doubts at all. That no doubt owed to the purity of the Princess’s filial devotion, to the constancy of Lady Ren, and to the mercy of Kinmanmon. When speaking to Ri Yū he used cunning flattery that did not reflect what was in his heart, but Ri Yū took it all in, praising him fulsomely and talking to him as if he were an old friend and confidant.

King Shō Nei, having been bewitched by Mōun’s sorcery, had put a loyal minister and a virtuous wife to death, and even supposed that he had slain his heir, but he was rather quite pleased with the outcome and decided that recompense was in order. After first discussing it with the *chūfugimi*, he expressed this intention to Mōun, who made Ri Yū Minister of State and Shōju Lord of Kochibira. King Shō Nei also praised Mōun in the highest terms, saying, “It was by your inerrant words that I realized that the Princess was actually Mō Kokutei’s love child and was able to execute the traitor. But what I am still uncertain about is when the *chūfugimi* will give birth. I

have only been told that it is not far off, but I still have some doubts. I am getting old and have no child to whom I can pass the throne on. If it is really true that she will soon give birth, I'd like to see some evidence soon." Mōun smiled. "Why does your majesty have doubts only about this? As I said previously, the prince in the *chūfugimi*'s womb is the reincarnation of a sage, and so although she does not have the usual physical aspect of pregnancy, the prince will be born in good condition within ten days. Then all of your doubts will be dispelled." King Shō Nei was overjoyed to hear that and ordered Minister of State Ri Yū to make haste with preparations. And yet the *chūfugimi*'s womb was empty and she would certainly not be giving birth. It seemed, therefore, that the would-be prophet Mōun had a plan in mind. The *chūfugimi* secretly summoned Ri Yū and asked, "I don't understand what the Reverend Master is saying. Am I really to give birth? What do you think?" Ri Yū answered in a whisper without hesitation, "Do you still not understand what is going on? You had no child when you were in your prime, and now that you are nearing fifty, do you suppose that you will become pregnant? This is all a scheme that has been worked out by Mōun to take over the reins of government. Thus, the prince that will be born is not in your womb. This has been left up to Kumagimi, who will bring the child at the latest within seven days. Put your mind at ease." Then full of smiles, the *chūfugimi* praised the wizard, "The Reverend Master is always able to come up with a clever scheme to help me out. He brought about the execution of Mō Kokutei and the beheading of the Princess and Lady Ren. Henceforth I shall sleep well, knowing that I can seek pleasure together with the Reverend Master, who will see that all of my wishes are fulfilled." She laughed boisterously, causing Ri Yū to look around. "We need to keep this at a whisper for now. The walls have ears, you know. This is all a secret." At that, the *chūfugimi* hurriedly pinched her cheek. Nodding to each other, they arose and parted.

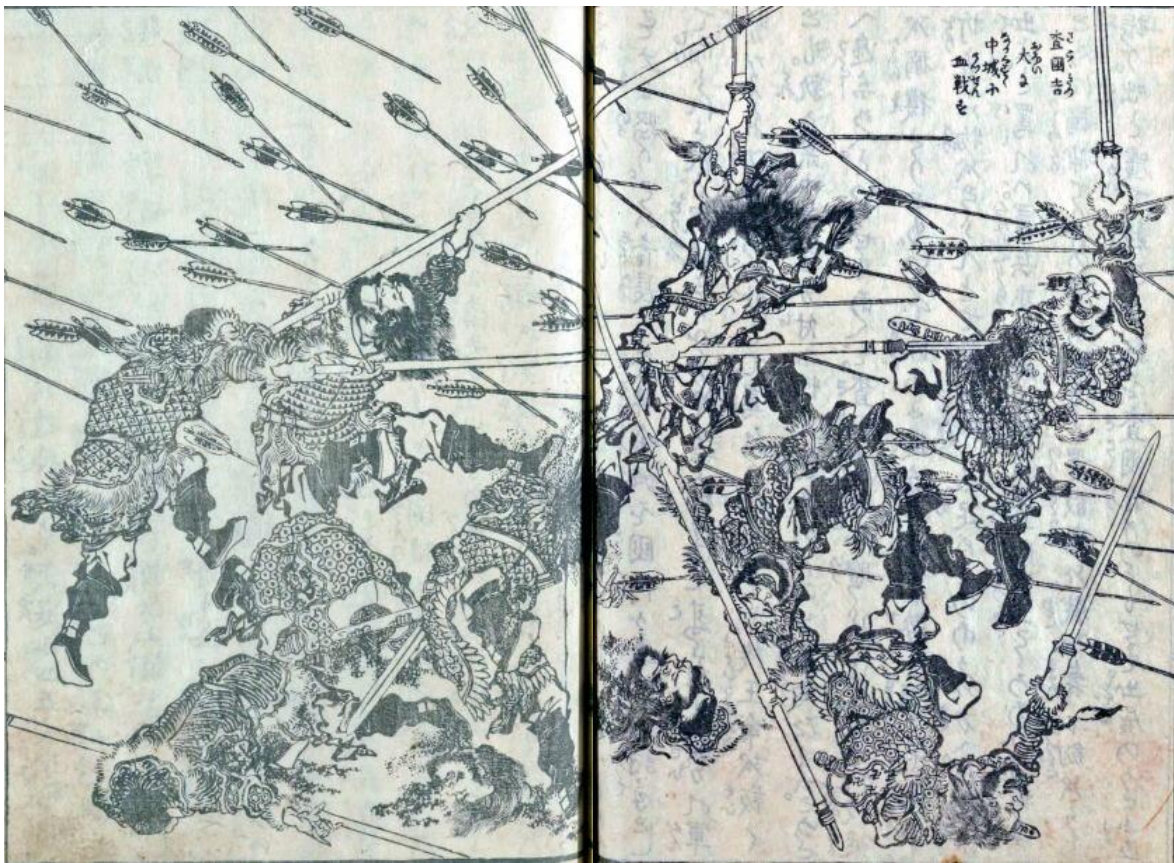
Chapter Forty-Two

Sa Kokukitsu fights for justice in the Middle Castle,
Bearing a palanquin, the two filial boys rush to Koegu.

Assistant Captain Sa Kokukitsu, a relative of Mō Kokutei, being a brave man who championed righteousness and placed little value on his own life, entrusted Shōju with going to the Middle Castle to help the Princess and Lady Ren escape. Then he whipped his swift horse and rushed to Mō Kokutei's house where he explained the situation to Kokutei's wife, Niigaki, and his two sons, Tsuru and Kame, telling them of their father's final injunctions. Offering various words of warning and encouragement, he ushered the three of them out the rear gate to escape. The retainers had caught wind of what was going on and, in a frenzy seeking a way to escape, were of no help. Since the end of the previous year, Niigaki was pregnant and, being in her final month, was not as mobile as usual. She urged Kokukitsu on, saying, "If I make a halfhearted attempt to flee, I'll only end up being a hindrance to you and slow you down. Leave me here and help the children escape. Quickly!" She only wept and refused to move. The boys, being very filial, would not hear of that. They helped their mother into a palanquin and called for servants to come bear it, but they had all fled. And so the brothers, whose shoulders had never once carried a load, had no other choice. With one in front and one in back they lifted the palanquin and began moving. The older brother not quite fifteen, the younger barely twelve, they were very dutiful in their actions, but not being of great strength they were exhausted after going only about six hundred yards. But their filial devotion was unusually strong, and with the elder encouraging the younger and the younger admonishing the elder—and not having the time to thank Sa Kokukitsu for his kindness or to shed tears for their father—their hearts were more pained than their shoulders that bore the heavy shafts. Not knowing how to regulate their breathing or to use a staff, they firmed up their staggering gait and, along with the setting of the autumn sun, finally made their escape.

Just then, at the head of forty or fifty mounted soldiers, Ri Yū besieged the house. The men forced their way in through both front and rear gates, shouting, "Mō Kokutei is a criminal and has been beheaded. We have been commanded by the Overseer of Haebaru (Ri Yū) to come here and arrest his wife and children. Come out at once and let yourselves be bound!" Sa Kokukitsu, still by himself in the inner room, pricked up his ears and said to himself, "If I don't

keep them in check for a time, they'll soon catch up with the boys and their mother and then my efforts will have been for naught. It is written that 'A woman takes a form for the benefit of those who know her, while a man dies for the benefit of those who know him.'¹ This is the moment for me to sacrifice myself to repay my debt of gratitude to Lord Mō." Then with sword in hand he rushed out, ridiculing the attackers. "This makes no sense. Who told you to do this? I was already commanded to come here, and I need no support. You'll lie, saying that you were ordered by regional officer, but you really just want to take advantage of the situation and steal from me the opportunity for a meritorious achievement. What foolishness!" Hearing this, the young men of the vanguard were infuriated. "That's a lot of blather! You were sent here to take Kokutei's household, but since there is a possibility that they would escape, we were sent as backup. What do you mean by accusing us of trying to snatch away your achievement? Even if it meant going against the will of the King, who would ever disobey a command from a regional officer? If you've taken them captive, then hand them over!" Sa Kokukitsu glared at them. "Even if I have arrested and bound them, why should I hand them over to you? You come barging in here calling



¹ This is paraphrased from a line in the 'Cike liezhuan' chapter of *The Records of the Grand Historian (Shiji)*.

yourselves ‘backup,’ while you’re only opportunists trying to take something. You thieves, get out of here at once before your luck runs out!” Even more enraged, the soldiers shouted, “Sa Kokukitsu is a traitor! Take him along with the others! Don’t let him say another word!” Then brandishing swords and spears they raised a battle cry and charged. Thinking nothing of it, Sa Kokukitsu took up a position near the door and, brandishing his three-and-a-half foot sword, easily cut down four or five of the soldiers, but more came pouring in, encircling him. Striking them on their armor and helmets, he managed to cut down several. The fighting went on for over half an hour, leaving a bloody scene strewn with corpses, not unlike the aftermath of the Battle of Zhuolu² or like looking into a mass burial mound. Nonplussed by such a display of formidable martial valor, many soldiers fell back, making an exit. Sa Kokukitsu, too, had lost his gauntlets, the stitches holding his breast protector had been cut, and he had sustained some deep wounds. Realizing that the end was near, he bolted the door, set the place on fire, and fled. Seeing this, the soldiers were thrown into panic. They finally managed to batter the door open and again rushed inside, first of all attempting to douse the flames. But the fire was fanned by a stiff wind from the west, and before long the entire structure was reduced to ashes, leaving the soldiers with no further recourse. Thinking that there might be corpses, they picked through the ashes, but found none that were recognizable. They discussed among themselves, “If we go back emptyhanded, we won’t be able to escape condemnation. What can we do to exonerate ourselves?” Then one shrewd soldier came forth and said, “If we report things as they actually happened, we will be charged with negligence and can expect no good outcome. But if we tell the Overseer of Haebaru (Ri Yū) that Sa Kokukitsu must have been double-dealing, that he slew Mō Kokutei’s wife and children and then set the house ablaze, jumping into the flames and dying, then we could present heads. In that case, how could we be convicted of any crime? We might even be rewarded. Even if they were able to escape death, Mō Kokutei’s sons are very young, and Sa Kokukitsu was seriously wounded. A homeless dog is like a skewered pig. It will be frenzied for a while, but its demise is assured.” Everyone agreed, “That’s a splendid idea.” Then cutting off the heads of some of their fallen comrades—both large and small—they tossed them into the flames. After they were adequately seared, they designated one as that of Sa Kokukitsu, and other as those of his sons, Tsuru and Kame, and of his wife, Niigaki, attaching tags to the ears of each one. Then

² A legendary battle fought in 2,400 BCE, ending in the victory of the Yellow Emperor over Chiyō tribes. It is described in the “Wu di bengi” chapter of *The Records of the Grand Historian (Shiji)*.

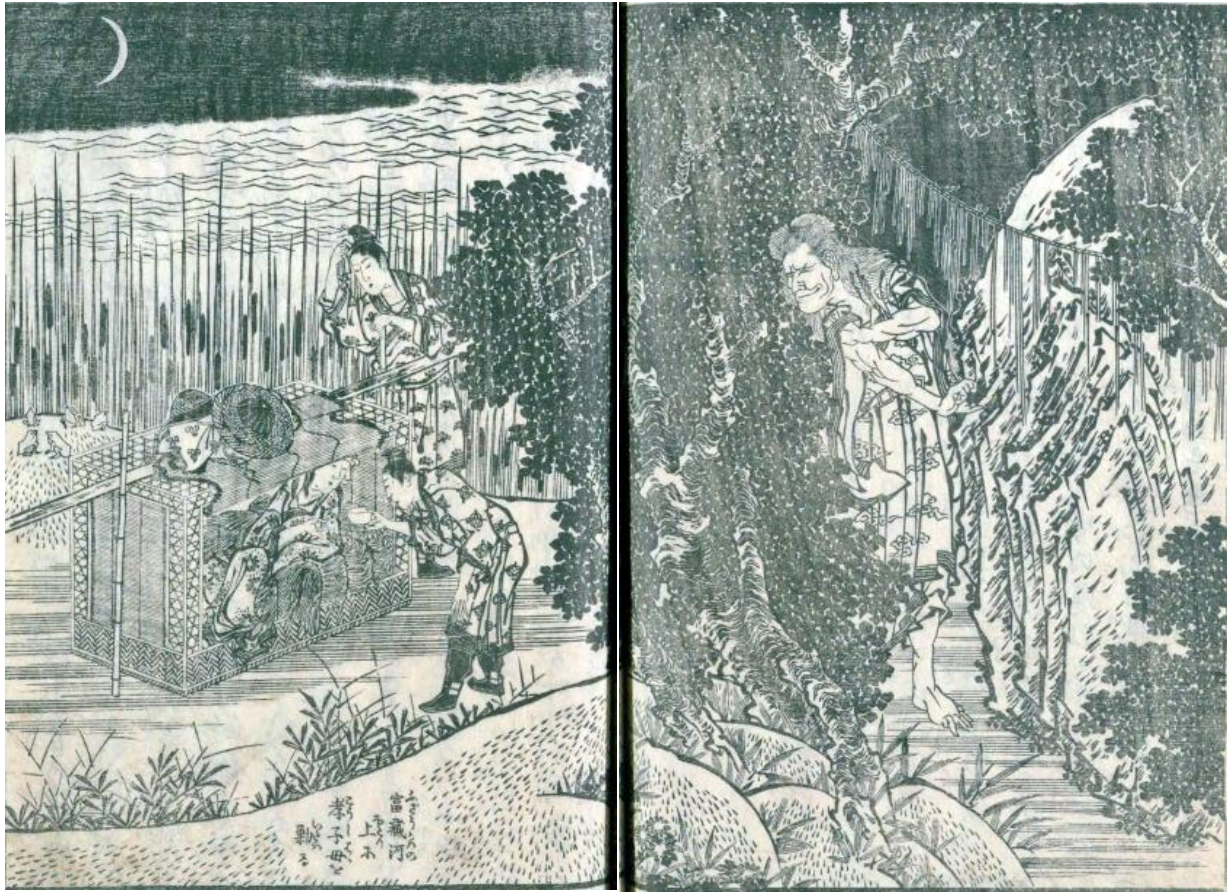
taking those, they travelled through the night, arriving in the capital at daybreak. They made a report to Ri Yū, who thanked them for their services and inspected the burnt heads. At length the heads were displayed in Tomarinotsu along with that of Kokutei, but since they were so charred, no one could tell whether or not they were genuine. Only Shōju secretly laughed when he saw them. Those who are burned after death will not have ash in their mouths, while those who die in the flames will. Looking at these heads, none have ash in their mouths, and therefore what either Ri Yū or the soldiers claim cannot be true. Shōju imagined that Lord Mō's children, along with Sa Kokukitsu, set the house on fire to fake their deaths, and escaped somewhere. The reason that Ri Yū does not realize this is that Heaven had mercy on the filial sons and the righteous man. Ah, moral principles are still alive. Traitors will yet be defeated and loyal subjects will yet prevail. With all doubts dispelled, the future seemed promising.

At that time Mō Kokutei's sons, Tsuru and Kame, unsure whether they would survive or join their father in death, in spite of all doubts were trying to help their mother escape though they did not value their own lives. Burning with anger at their father's unjust treatment they pressed on, the hems of their tattered robes having no chance to dry because of the many streams they crossed. They were refugees bearing a palanquin without aid and with no clear path.³ The burning pain in their shoulders was unbearable, but they were careful not to let their exhaustion show so as not to give their mother cause to worry. They spent that night wandering in the mountains of Koegu, gathering sweet acorns and sharing them with their mother to stave off hunger. Then finding shelter under a shaded crag, they spent three or four days there. Though it was a deserted area in the mountains, it was nevertheless close to home and thus not a place where they could remain for long. The brothers discussed the matter and decided that if they could cross the two *magiris* of Kushi and Kinbu and reach the mountain villages of Ōgimi or Hanechi, then they would be far from both the palace and the Middle Castle. When they proposed this to their mother, Niigaki, she said, "I am a woman, so I'll leave all of that to you two. But both Kushi and Hanechi are at the extreme point of Sanboku District, and I hear that the way there is very distant, and you two are only fourteen and twelve years of age, unaccustomed to the hardships of a journey that would be difficult even for grown men. For you to bear your mother there on your shoulders would give me cause to worry. After giving birth to you, Kame, I have not been entirely well these many years, and though I have not been bedridden, there have

³ This sentence includes several world plays.

been few days when I have felt energetic. Just as I was thinking that I would have only two children, from the end of last year I realized that I was expecting another, and with each passing month I felt every heavier and less mobile. It pains me to have my sons who are still in their tender years carry me, as if I were a mother bird with its wings broken, barely staying alive and only able to cry as it looks up at the nest in the treetops. Over the years I had forgotten about having more children, and now that I am almost forty, to give birth again seemed like something I might not survive, so without telling my lord (Kokutei), last month I consulted a fortuneteller who, after some deliberation told me with a look of amazement, ‘A male child is in your womb, and not long after his birth he’ll be revered as a King. But in spite of such good fortune, his life will be very short.’ None of that struck me as true. The fortuneteller was likely a secret agent in the service of Ri Yū and prepared that statement in advance in order to speak ill our lord. As a mother, who has been prone to illness these many years and is now pregnant, to remain alive and feeling anxious, while her husband, who has always been in good health and never ill, is executed because of a false accusation, just goes to show how uncertain and cruel life is. Since it’s a matter of shame for me I have never mentioned it before, but I was an abandoned child and my parentage is uncertain. While still in diapers I was found by the Hama River in Kitadani and was adopted and raised by your grandfather, Minister of State Mō, who later gave me in marriage to our lord. At that time he gave me a nine-and-a-half inch dagger, saying, ‘This was found wrapped in your clothing when you were found, and is a keepsake from your birth parents. Cherish it.’ I have kept it with me ever since. My father-in-law was thus also a parent who saved me and raised me, so that though of unknown origins I was able to marry into a distinguished family and even be blessed with two filial sons. But now our family faces great peril, and though we have escaped for now, I have come to the end of my road. Abandon me here, and you two go off into hiding in some distant place and wait for a time to seek vengeance against our enemies, fulfill your duty of loyalty to the country, and restore the good name of your father. Now hurry!’ Even as she urged them, at the thought of a long separation her sleeves became sodden with tears. Tsuru and Kame said various things to console her, then lifted up the palanquin and continued northward beyond the *magiri* of Kibu until they approached Fuzō River.

This river was the largest in Sanboku District, but since it was already dark they did not launch a boat. Tsuru and Kame felt increasingly rushed in spirit, but unaccustomed as they were



to bearing a palanquin their steps were straitened, like the confining world they had entered.⁴ Catching their breath and changing shoulders, they stood and rested near the river, at a distance from the water's edge. They brought the day to a close at the edge of a desolate field, bedding down among the autumn grasses and making a meal by mixing with spring water the dried boiled rice they had brought with them, offering it first of all to their mother under the moonlight. Already unwell, exposed to the autumn winds and sleeping these four days out in the open, her condition had grown worse, probably due to the chill. Her labor pains began and she felt as if her entrails were bursting. She put her hand up to the window of the palanquin rather than cry out in pain. Tsuru and Kame panicked and diligently rubbed her back to ease the pain. They had fled in such haste that they had forgotten to bring medicine, and the boys knew nothing about childbirth. Their efforts at care proved useless, and they could only urge her to hurry and give birth.

Now Kumagimi of Kitadani, who had previously colluded with the *chūfugimi* and Ri Yū to get rid of Princess Nei by saying that the sea god required the sacrifice of a woman born in the

⁴ This sentence includes word plays.

year, month, day, and hour of the dragon, was exposed by Mō Kokutei as a fraud just as she was about to carry it out. Taking the blame on herself alone, she was banished from Kitadani, but Ri Yū had secretly been supplying her with provisions. Now that Mō Kokutei was out of the way, he was able to deal with her openly. Ri Yū then told Kumagimi of the plot with Mōun to provide a child for the *chūfugimi*, and left the matter up to her. It so happened that she was wandering about in the area and saw the three of them with Niigaki already beginning her labor. Kumagimi was very pleased and, coming out from the shade of a tree, approached them and peered into the palanquin. “Ah, how pitiful to fall ill on a journey and unable to find lodgings. You boys stand away. I’ll take care of her,” she said, trying to sound helpful as she came closer. The brothers did not trust her and at first declined her offer, but looking her over carefully, they saw that she was an elderly woman, about seventy years of age and well attired. Besides, they were quite inexperienced in the type of care their mother needed. After some consideration Tsuru said, “We’re from a place near Koegu, but our father recently died. Today is the eve of the seventh day after his death, and though our mother is not in good condition, she wanted to visit his grave, so we put her in this palanquin to carry her there. On the way her labor pains began and they are severe. If you have any suitable medicine, please share it with us.” The two brothers pleaded, shedding such copious tears that their sleeves were soon sodden.

Chapter Forty-Three

Exploring a belly, Kumagimi steals an infant,
Setting the coffin adrift, Tsuru and Kame see their late father.

Hearing their story, Kumagimi wiped her fake tears and said, “It moves me to tears to imagine how helpless your mother must feel to go into labor in such a desolate place, not wanting to leave her care up to two young boys. Long ago my father was a doctor, and thus I am somewhat accustomed to seeing difficult deliveries, so I could do better than an inexperienced midwife. Please let me take a look at her.” Tsuru and Kame stood back while Kumagimi went behind the palanquin and inserted her hand to stroke Niigaki’s breasts, then used all ten fingers to assess the condition of her abdomen. After some thought, she said, “She is about to give birth. But if she is chilled by the night dew, the delivery will not go well. And without the aid of medicine, her contractions will be weak, so that either the birth canal won’t open or the placenta won’t descend, and it could prove very difficult. And what’s more, her legs are swollen and there is a yellow secretion between her toes. There is no doubt effective medicine for such things, but since I am not a physician I can’t say for sure. But we definitely need a parturient broth consisting of equal parts of peach kernel, herbaceous peony, peony bark, poria, and cinnamon. This prescription was first made by Zhongjing¹ and is popularly known as ‘hastening’ [*hayame*]. If you go north from here along Fuzō River making inquiries, you’ll find a pharmacy. So boys, if the moon sets it will be hard for you to find your way. Run there quickly and get some medicine.” Tsuru said, “I’ll go along Fuzō River and buy medicine at that pharmacy. My brother will stay here and look after my mother.” Not waiting for a reply, he dashed off northward. Clucking her tongue loudly, Kumagimi said with exasperation, “How stupid of me! I was in such a hurry that I neglected to say that if the peach kernels are not well roasted and if the herbaceous peonies are not red, then the medicine will be of no effect. Your brother could not yet have gone far. Run after him and tell him. Hurry!” Kame said “yes,” but was reluctant to have both brothers away from their mother. But then, the medicine would be of no use. Seeing the hesitation that bespoke a cleverness beyond the boy’s years, Kumagimi raised her voice and scolded him, “Come on, get moving! Even if there were dozens of you, what good would it be for you to stand

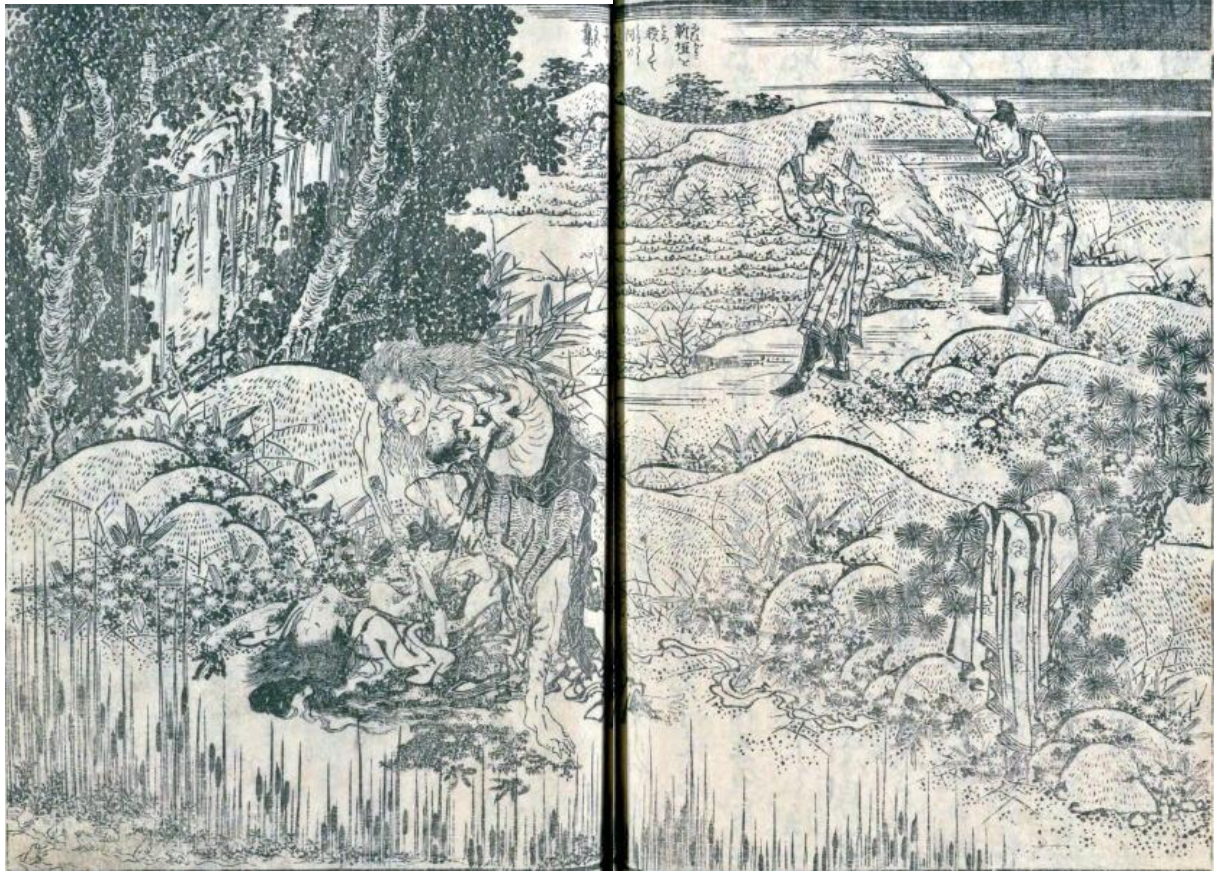
¹ Zhang Zhongjing (150-219), famous pharmacologist of the Eastern Han.

guard here? Or are you so afraid of the dark that you'll stay here and bring about your mother's death? Off with you!" Without saying a word, Kame dashed off.

Seeing that Kame had disappeared beyond the trees, Kumagimi turned to Niigaki and said, "You seem to be in great pain, but please listen to what I have to say. Though you are in labor now, birth is still not immediate. I think it will not be until the full tide tomorrow morning,² and anyway it would be most inopportune if it happens after your boys return. But you probably don't understand what I mean. This old woman wants the child in your womb, so that's why I am treating you so nicely. Were it not for the child in your womb, I wouldn't pay you the slightest notice. Anyway, giving birth after age thirty is risky, and you probably wouldn't survive, so rather than let you suffer so long, think of yourself as a goner and let me cut the child out of your womb. I felt the dagger you have in the breast of your kimono. Let me have it." Then inserting her hand into Niigaki's kimono she pulled out the bag containing the dagger. But holding fast to its cord, Niigaki pleaded in a weak and pained voice as she gazed up at the old woman, "I don't know what your connection is to it, but what do you want with the child in my womb? This mother doesn't value her life, but I hear that a woman who dies without delivering her child is reborn as a mysterious bird that wanders about on rainy nights, and that it is a sin that obstructs the attainment of Nirvana. But whatever it means for my next life, what I see now are my children who have lost their father, and if their mother is killed, then they won't even know that the parturient medicine they've gone off to buy won't even serve as water to moisten my dying lips.³ Can't you see and have pity on a parent who values a valueless life, wandering in the darkness of attachment of children? I'll give you this child after it is born. Please ..." Kumagimi moved her ear closer. "I can't understand a thing you're saying. It sounds like the buzzing of a mosquito, and my old ears can't pick up on it. You're actually very fortunate. I'll let you in on a secret that can be a farewell gift for you on your way to the underworld, my greatest kindness to you. I don't know whose wife you are, but the child in your womb will undeservedly be looked up to as heir to the throne of the kingdom of Ryukyu, as the parent of its people, and as inheritor of its wealth. You could never have dreamed of such good fortune. That is why I'm telling you to let me cut your belly open. There is a reason for this, but I can't go into details. When I felt your abdomen, the child was positioned to the left, which means it's a boy, just what I need. It's an

² It was thought that children were born during full tide.

³ *Matsugo no mizu*, a ritual in which the mouth of a dying person is wetted, usually using leaves of sakaki.



honor for you to die for this. It won't be too painful. Just endure it for a moment." The old woman's ostentatious tirade seemed even stranger given what the fortuneteller had said the month before: "The child in your womb will have a short life, but will have the fortune of becoming king." Was that really true? Whether or not it was true that this child would be heir to the throne, did that have something to do with the fact that her husband was executed though innocent, and that his reputation as a traitor remained? Even if she ended up being butchered, she was determined not to let the child inside her be taken, but her endurance was waning along with the moon and her cries grew as feeble as the chirping of insects in the grass. Her body shaking, she tried to get up, wondering when the boys would return. Losing patience, Kumagimi said "Ah, what a bother!" and, snapping the cord attached to the bag and tucking up the sleeves of her kimono, grabbed Niigaki by the lapels and pushed her down facing up. Then wielding the flashing dagger cut open her belly. Inserting her hand into the wound, she pulled out the contents of Niigaki's womb. Sure enough, it was a boy. As she cut it free from the placenta, the child raised its first cry. Kumagimi wiped her bloody hands with the bag, and then ripped off a sleeve of Niigaki's kimono to use for swaddling. Was what Kumagimi heard in the distance the sound

of the boys returning? Someone was coming carrying a torch. Seeing that, she panicked, saying to herself, “That must be the boys. This dagger will be a clue to the lineage of this woman and her children. I must not leave it behind.” Wiping the blood off the blade, she put it in its sheath and hung it on her waist. Then dandling the child to still its crying, she absconded as fast as she could.

Now Tsuru and Kame had gone along Fuzō River far beyond the thousand or so yards that the old woman had mentioned, but unless they crossed the river there was no human habitation at all, much less any pharmacy. They began to think that they had been deceived and, begging a torch from an old man who was guarding drying sheaves of rice, they were able to light their way back from their useless errand. They felt increasingly apprehensive. They tried to hurry, but on an unfamiliar path in the dark and having no sense of direction, they stumbled over tree stumps and had their legs torn by brambles. When they were finally close to where they had left their mother, they could faintly hear an infant crying. Assuming that their mother had given birth and worried about her condition, the boys ran breathlessly back to the palanquin. They held the torch near only to find that their mother was not in it. Then they found her lying in a clump of grass off to the right, smeared with fresh blood and with her entrails hanging out. In shock and grief they wailed, unable to comprehend what had happened. They tried lifting her up, but there was no life in her and there was nothing they could do to save her. Of all human grief none is greater than either losing a parent or being preceded in death by a child. Grief was all the greater for the boys because their mother had died an unnatural death before her time. As if her distorted face could yet tell them something, they rocked her body, finding no other outlet for their grief. Being the elder of the two, Tsuru wiped his burning tears and said, “What do you think? That old hag was acting so sympathetic, but she just wanted us out of the way so that she would carry out her plan. We didn’t catch on to that and were deceived. It is of no use now to regret our having gone off to buy medicine. The fact that we see no infant around is that the old woman took it to make medicine for some serious malady.⁴ Just to think about it is painful.” He cried, stamping his feet. Taking a deep breath, Kame stood up with a fierce look, saying, “We know who our enemy is and she can’t have gone far. Let’s go strike her down!” Tsuru grabbed his sleeve. “He, wait! Your resolution is very good, but in a pitch dark night like this and having no idea where she

⁴ The *Konjaku monogatari* includes an account of Taira no Sadamori wanting his daughter-in-law’s fetus in order to concoct a medicine.

headed, how could we ever catch up with her? We know her face. She might escape us for a while, but she won't escape Heaven's net. She has likely planned for any halfhearted attempt to pursue her, so our resolve would only be wasted. Father always said, 'Even more than a day of embarrassment while alive, an ignoble death is the greatest shame.' It would be very unfilial of us to have others see our mother's wretched remains. Let's take care of them quickly." As they faced the place where their mother lay, they were resolved to shed no tears. Was it a dream or reality? Whichever it was, how sad that their mother should expire before the dew of Adashino dispersed.⁵ Aside from their torch, they had no fire that could be used for cremation, but perhaps it was its light that gave an idea to their distressed minds. Converting the palanquin into a coffin, as they lifted it onto their shoulders it felt even heavier with the added weight of the debt of gratitude for the life their mother had given them. The cycle of birth and death painfully brought home to them, they hurried toward the bank of the Fuzō River. Up to this time in the kingdom of Ryukyu, burial in water was common rather than either cremation or interment. When Tsuru and Kame arrived at the riverbank with their mother's remains, the first rays of dawn were appearing.

Those who grow up in poverty are accustomed to making do with what is at hand and are used to dealing with gloom, but now the children of someone with the reputation of a lord were obliged to bury their mother without a proper coffin, with no priest to conduct rites, and with no mourners present aside from the brothers themselves. Seen off only by cawing crows and stray dogs, they finally set the palanquin down at the water's edge. Compared to the day before, they felt more wretched than ever. Even if this river should dry up, their tears would never cease. In lamentation, they said, "Our father was completely loyal, often remonstrating with his sovereign and taking the woes of the kingdom upon himself. But his good medicine was rejected and coming under false condemnation he lost his life, his household was abolished, his wife, children, and servants were dispersed, and now our devoted mother has been killed by a cruel and monstrous old woman, the child in her womb has been stolen, along with the dagger that she had cherished so many years. What kind of karma could have led to this? People say that those who are sincere will receive divine protection, and we thought so too, but that is a falsehood. Though one must resign oneself to a world that offers no certainty to the aged and the weak, where anyone can succumb to disease, yet both our parents departed their lives before their time

⁵ In classical literature, Adashino was a place of cremation, evoking the sadness of death. These sentences contain numerous word plays.



and within only five days, leaving us behind, our destination is as unsure as that of autumn leaves blowing in the wind. Reduced to penury we cannot arrange for any memorial services and can only hope that his water will refresh her on her journey on the path of death and cleanse her from the stain of the six dusts.⁶ If the water is pure there will be no fish in it. If there is no wind, boats will not go out. Out of boundless grief at separation the aged crane cries piteously,⁷ and affection is as difficult to set aside as for a turtle to give up its shell.⁸ Our lament defies expression in words. Please accept our obsequy.” Having finished their speech, the brothers bowed down in weeping, giving full voice to their grief. After some time they sat up, saying, “Someone might overhear our useless complaints. We mustn’t cry.” Reproving each other, they resolved to stop their wailing and lowered the palanquin into the stream. As they watched the current carry it away, they pressed their palms together reverentially. They were startled by a thud of something as if it were falling over toward their backs. They looked around to see that an

⁶ The six *gunas* are sight, sound, scent, taste, touch, and ideation.

⁷ This is based on a verse in *Baishi wenxuan*.

⁸ These are also allusions to the two boys, whose names mean “crane” and “turtle” respectively.

imposing giant of a man with a sword drawn had fallen over face up, dead with blood spurting from his mouth. Both of the brothers' hair was standing on end at seeing such a dreadful sight. Upon closer inspection, they saw that it was Aku Ōhō, a man who had for many years been in the service of their father Mō Kokutei. Thinking that it still might be possible to save him, Kame was about to rush to his side and help him get up, but Tsuru quickly stopped him. "If a wolf is dying, one shouldn't carelessly approach it. This rogue, who was so indebted to our father, absconded a few days ago from the Middle Castle, and has somehow turned up here. Since he had his sword drawn when he collapsed, he no doubt intended to take our heads, hoping to get some reward. And so, finding such an atrocity loathsome, Kinmanmon must have struck him down. Don't even think of showing him mercy." Kame nodded in assent to his brother's stern reproof. When both of them looked up at the willow leaves rustling in the wind, they saw the vague figure of someone standing beneath the tree. He was wearing a purple cap, a deep blue robe, a yellow sash with the insignia of a coiled dragon, and was holding a sword drawn from a golden sheath. It was none other than the image of Mō Kokutei as he appeared in this life. Seeing him, the two boys exclaimed, "Look, it's our father! Were you safe and sound after all, then? We're Tsuru and Kame." They ran excitedly toward him, whereupon he vanished like a morning mist. Oblivious to the shoreline rocks over which they stumbled, the boys tried to pursue the image, themselves pursued by the autumn wind. Yet there was nothing but the cawing of crows and the sound of wavelets lapping the bank of the Fuzō River. The boys ran until they reached the Bay of Takashio between Kitadani and Mount Yomudani. By then the sun was sinking over the sea, ending the brief autumnal day. In a daze, they looked at each other, wondering where they were.

Chapter Forty-Four

King Shō Nei jokes and creates a disaster,
Because of her evil karma, the *chūfugimi* is torn apart.

In the thirty-eighth year of the reign of King Shō Nei (that is, the second year of Angen [1176] in Japan)¹ on the seventh day of the ninth month, in the hour of the ox [2:00 a.m.], a commotion arose with the news that the *chūfugimi*'s labor had begun. Ladies and officials of the court were running about, and the Minister of State Ri Yū hastened to the parturition chamber. Even the ladies in waiting and those from the royal physician's office were denied access. Hearing the news, King Shō Nei was delirious with joy and sent a messenger to the parturition chamber to inquire about how it was going. Soon it was announced, "A prince has been born. Mother and child are both well." Immediately after that, Mōun stood at the base of the steps leading to the throne. King Shō Nei summoned him to come up next to the throne and said, beaming with smiles, "Reverend Master's prophecy was not mistaken. A prince has been born, and my child shall grow up healthy and strong. Tell me his long-range fortune." Mōun replied, "Let your majesty's mind be at ease. As I previously told you in secret, the Prince is the reincarnation of a sage, and will be endowed with peerless wisdom. The years allotted to him will be as those of Heaven and Earth. Your majesty should quickly prepare his princely quarters, appoint him as heir apparent, and then when he is two or three years of age, yield the throne to him, giving him full control of the government. Then the land will be at ever greater peace, the people will bask in the virtue of his reign, there will be no more brigandage, people will no longer lock their doors at night, there will be fair winds and gentle rain, the five grains will flourish, and there will be no traitors. And all of this will be because of the beneficence of the King in adhering to the correct Way." The King could not have been more pleased to hear that, resolving to provide the child with the best upbringing. His most trusted vassal, Ri Yū, presented someone's wife to act as wet nurse, saying that she was his niece. All were his allies, including the doctors involved. Among court officials there were those who said secretly "It's strange that the *chūfugimi*, who is almost fifty years old and who showed no sign of pregnancy, should suddenly give birth." But fearing authority, they could not say such things openly. Those of

¹ Bakin's calculation was mistaken. There is no correlation between these years.

integrity lamented the situation, while many flatterers offered their congratulations and curried favor.

After fifty or so days had passed, the time arrived to end confinement in the parturition chamber. Mother and child were both in good condition, and so King Shō Nei had Mōun determine an auspicious date and time and declared a general amnesty, pardoning Kumagimi of Kitadani as well as all convicted criminals. He summoned the Council of Three and all ministers to the Dragon Palace to celebrate the birth of the Prince. Delicacies from both sea and land were prepared most exquisitely and musicians performed the Tenson Song in the Taihei mode, accompanying dancers. That day, the only one absent was the Kochihira Lord Tō Shōju, who begged off saying that he was unwell. To the right of the throne behind a curtain of crystal beads sat the *chūfugimi* wearing a phoenix crown and a diaphanous robe, accompanied by a nurse holding the Prince. To the left stood Reverend Master Mōun wearing a golden crown, a robe of lotus leaves, and a sash made of fragrant grass. Also headed by the Minister of State Ri Yū were the Minister of Law, Regional Officers, Lords, yellow-capped officials [*kōbōkan*], Captains, on down to Senior Pages, all properly attired and standing in rows, performing the ritual of kneeling three times and kowtowing nine times, all shouting “banzai” in felicitation. After the dancing had ended, King Shō Nei summoned Ri Yū to come closer, and said, “You have often praised the remarkable capacities of my child, hence I wish to establish him now as heir apparent, but only a hundred days have passed since his birth. It would seem absurd to praise his talents at this point. But won’t some of the ministers and officials despise his immaturity and not obey him? What do you think should be done?” Ri Yū replied quite without reserve, “Though the Prince is still in diapers, he is the reincarnation of a sage. And since your majesty is already past sixty, it is not too soon to designate an heir. Have you not yet heard that lately on the banks of the Fuzō River the children sing ‘A god has come in human guise, The water of Fuzō are pure. A god has come in human guise, the white sands have turned into rice.’ This is none other than a felicitous sign of the birth of the Prince. Why should you hesitate?” The king again asked, “Previously when on Mount Kyūkyū I ordered the opening of the Mizuchi Mound, the children in the streets sang, ‘An evil god has come, The ocean tides are impure. And evil god has come, The white sands have turned into crabs.’ And the Reverend Master appeared. What does that mean?” Ri Yū was unable to answer. Seeing that, Mōun guffawed and drew near to say with an air of self-importance, “Why does your majesty not understand that? When they sang ‘An evil god has come,’ they were

reviling the fact that Princess Nei, who is not even your child, had been designated as heir. And so, now that you have deposed the Princess and a prince has been born, they sing, ‘A god has come in human guise.’ The ‘evil god’ referred to the Princess, who was not of your seed, and the ‘god in human guise’ is the Prince, who is a reincarnation of a sage. The saying that ‘Heaven has no mouth, so it must speak through man’² is true, isn’t it?” Ri Yū sighed, “Yes, that is certainly true.” The *chūfugimi* was extremely pleased to hear this, and urged the King, “Why does your majesty hesitate? Who would deny such an auspicious sign? You should quickly appoint the Prince as heir.” Ah, what deceitful words there were! The children’s song “An evil god has come. The white sands have turned into crabs” referred to the time when King Shō Nei, paying no heed to the remonstrations of his loyal minister, opened the Mizuchi Mound unexpectedly releasing a devil, Mōun, who has held sway over the entire country. Now when they sing “A god has come in human guise. The water of Fuzō are pure” they are referring to the fact that Minamoto no Tametomo, giving aid to the Princess, arrived at Kunigami from Little Ryukyu and, passing through the *magiri* of Kushi and Kibu, crossed the Fuzō River, finally reaching Haeburu. King Shō Nei, being somewhat dull of mind, did not understand any of that and, being led further astray by Mōun’s explanations, was deliriously happy. He ordered an official to bring the casket containing the gem. Then holding it high he faced Ri Yū and said, “From this day henceforth the Prince is heir to the throne and the Minister of State is regent. Although Princess Nei lost one of the two royal gems, the remaining one will belong to the Prince. Until he is old enough to distinguish good from evil, he will be raised by the queen, and then transferred to the heir’s quarters in the Middle Castle. In the meantime, this gem will be entrusted to the Minister of State. Take care not to lose it.” Then he handed the casket to Ri Yū, who reverentially received it. This was announced to the Council of Three and all present, who raised their voices shouting “banzai!”

Then facing Mōun, King Shō Nei asked, smiling, “Not a single one of the Reverend Master’s pronouncements on weal or woe, good or bad fortune has proven wrong. I think that where there is a name, there must necessarily be form. That which has a name but no form would only be disaster or good fortune. Does the Reverend Master have the ability, using supernatural

² This saying also appears in the “Kiyomizu-dera enshō” section of the first chapter of *Heike monogatari*. It also appears in the *Gojō naigi shō* (1265), a collection of saying and anecdotes attributed to either Shinzei or Taira no Shigemori.

powers, to see that form?” Mōun answered, “Your majesty says that weal and woe have no form, but that what has a name has a form, and what has a form necessarily has a name. For example, the sun and moon are very remote and it is impossible to know their actual sizes, but they have names. In Japan, the sun is called Ōhirume no Mikoto and the moon is Tsukiyomi no Mikoto, or Sasaraetoko.³ Buddhists also revere the sun, using it to refer to the Tathagata Amitābha. Also in the *Rōshi rekiyō chūkyō* (also known as *Senkaku ruisho*) we read: ‘The surname of the sun is Chō, its given name is Hyō, and its alias is Chōri. The surname of the moon is Bun, its given name is Shin, and its alias is Shikō.’⁴ How much more so, then, good fortune, whose form is like an ox, muscular and vivid in color. It is called the deer of Heaven (or the Heavenly deer beast). They say that when there is a person who is endowed with the kingly Way, the Heavenly deer will bring good fortune to the realm.⁵ Also, Meng Kang⁶ said, ‘If it has one horn it is a Heavenly deer, but if it has two horns it is perverse and evil. However, both the heavenly ones and the perverse and evil ones are in the same category as lion dogs.’ Yang Yongxiu⁷ is quite mistaken when he opines that ‘a Heavenly deer is [only] an enormous toad.’ Recently during the Yuanyou era, [Emperor] Zhezong of Song disguised himself as a Taoist and went out into the marketplace, proclaiming himself to be the Saint of Prosperity and Longevity.⁸ Or it may have been [Emperor] Renzong of Song.⁹ He was also known as Fu Lushou, Old Man of the Far South, and Master Taishan.¹⁰ In India, Śrīmahādevī, Great Goddess of Wealth and Prosperity, also known as Lady of Virtuous Deeds,¹¹ rewarded people with profit and good fortune. She is often portrayed in paintings. In the Far East there is no mention of the form [of good fortune], but there is the name

³ Vol. 3 of the 1678 dictionary *Gōrui setsuyōshū*: “Ōhirume no miya is the god of the sun.” In no. 983 of the *Man’yōshū*, Ōtomo no Sakanoue no Iratsume uses *sasaraetoko* (“charming man”) to refer to the moon:

Yama no ha no sasaraetoko ama no hara to Wataru Hikari mirake shi yoshi mo

Like a charming man the moon in the heavens peeps over the mountain—

how pleasant to see him finding a ford for his light.

⁴ In a note, Gotō Tanji states that he was unable to find this citation in the source mentioned. See *Chinsetsu Yumiharizuki, ge*, Nihon koten bungaku taikei 61 (Tokyo: Iwanami shoten, 1962), 100, n13.

⁵ This is based on a line from *Song shu* by Shen Yue (441-513).

⁶ Scholar who lived in Wei during the Three Kingdoms period. He annotated the *Han shu*.

⁷ Better known as Yang Shen (1488-1559).

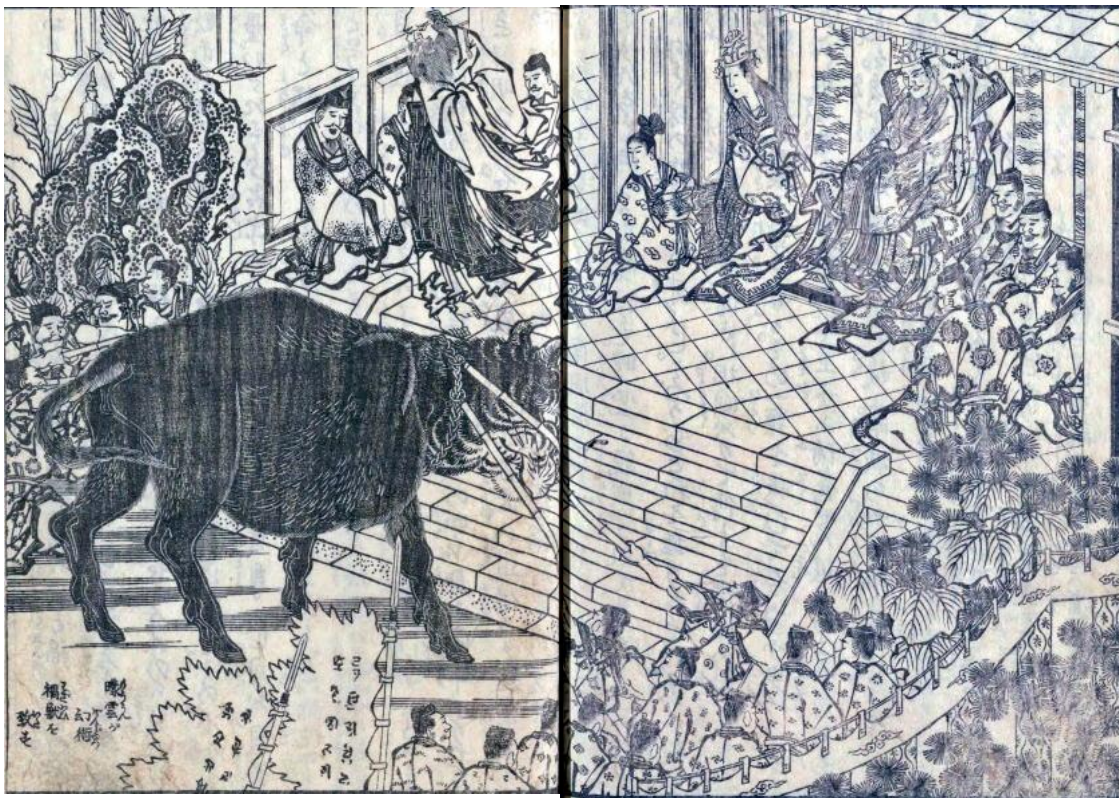
⁸ The Yuanyou era was 1086-1094. Song Zhezong (1077-1109). In an interlinear note, Bakin cites the Han scholar Ying Shao’s *Fengsu tongyi* as the source, but this is an obvious anachronism.

⁹ Song Renzong (1030-1063). Here again in an interlinear note Bakin cites Qu Kunyu’s *Gujin leishu zuanyao* as his source, but Gotō Tanji (101, n22) claims that this source includes no mention of this.

¹⁰ Bakin cites *Wuzazu* as his source, which includes no such information.

¹¹ Kichijō tennyo in Japanese.

Sakimitama. (*Nihon shoki*)¹² Bad fortune has the form of an ox but with the head of a tiger. It is called the Gate of Demons. Anciently, the Yellow Emperor had the gods Shenshu and Yulü catch it and feed it to a tiger. (*Fengsu tongyi*) During the Kaiyuan era, a god of poverty came to [Emperor] Xuanzong of Tang in a dream identifying himself as Xu Mao. He tried to steal Yang Guifei's sashet and the emperor's jade flute, and was pursued by the god Zhong Kui.¹³ (*[Gujin] shiwen leiju*) In India, Kālarātri was said to preside over bad fortune among people.¹⁴ She was extremely ugly in appearance. (details in *Abhidharmanośa-bhāṣya* and *Zuting shiyuan*)¹⁵ In Japan there is no mention of the form [of bad fortune]. But its name is the god of *magatsumi*. And *magatsumi* is the same as the god of misfortune. In our ancient language, misfortune was called *maga*, (*Nihon shoki*)¹⁶ and evil things are called *magakoto*. (*Man'yōshū*) This refers to something that is bent and does not become straight. These things all have different names, but they refer to bad fortune. Now it is difficult to bring good fortune into being, but inviting bad



¹² This name appears in the “Age of the Gods” chapter of *Nihon shoki*.

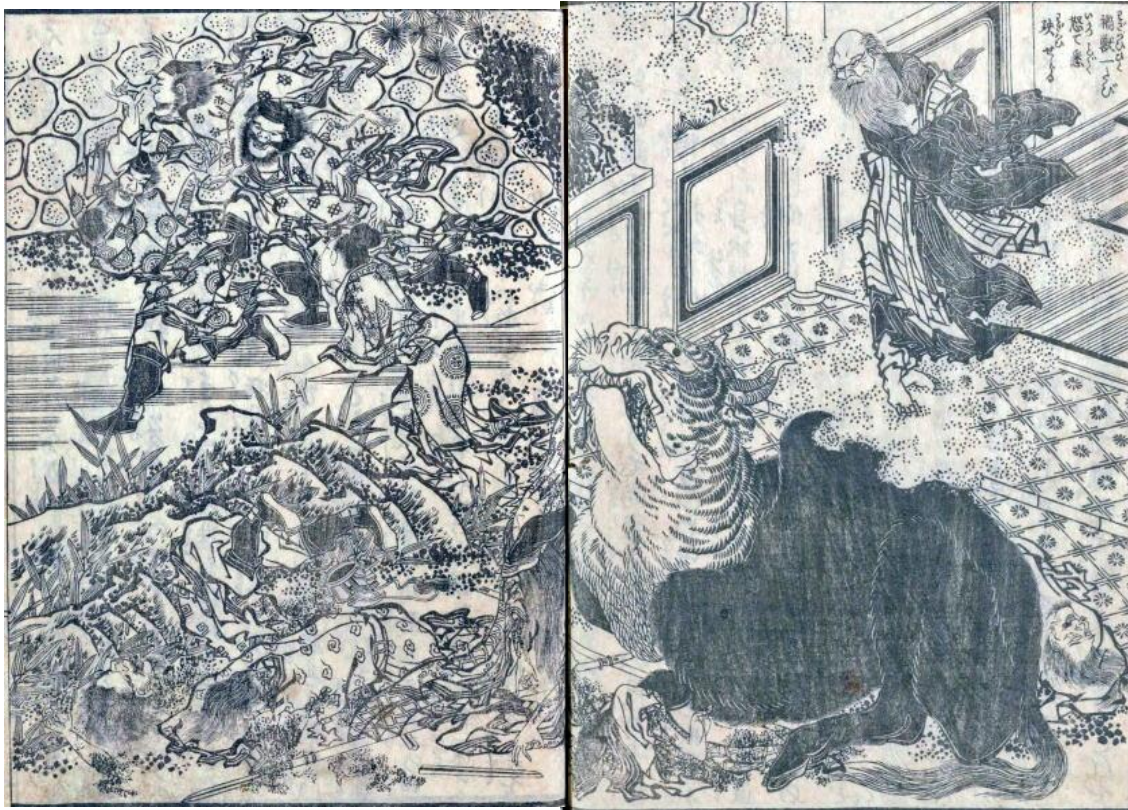
¹³ Tang Xuangzong (685-762; r. 712-756). Yang Guifei (719-756).

¹⁴ She was the younger sister of Śrīmahādevī.

¹⁵ *Abhidharmanośa-bhāṣya* was written by Vasubandhu (4th or 5th cent.). *Zuting shiyuan* is by the Zen monk Shanqing of the Northern Song.

¹⁶ In both the *Kojiki* and the *Nihon shoki*, the character 禍 is given the reading *maga*.

fortune is easy. Which form does your majesty wish to see? I shall do as you say.” King Shō Nei



laughed boisterously upon hearing this, and said, “The Reverend Master’s miraculous powers are backed by such subtle erudition. I’ll worry about what’s difficult later, and give priority to what’s easy. Show me the form of misfortune right away.” Mōun replied, “That will be simple.” Then with his eyes closed, intoning an incantation and forming a mudra with his hands, after some time passed he pointed outside, whereupon seven junior pages immediately led by chains a strange beast from the courtyard. Then he said, “We have just now captured this beast in your courtyard. You have never yet see such a creature, and no one here knows its name, but I am showing it to you.” Then he ordered Ri Yū to lead the beast to the base of the steps to the throne. Looking at it, both sovereign and subjects found it to be similar in form to an ox, but with a tiger’s head. Then turning to Mōun, King Shō Nei said, “Reverend Master, there has never been such a creature in our kingdom. Tell me its name.” Mōun replied, “This is the bad fortune you asked about.” The Council of Three and all the court officials were both astounded and suspicious upon hearing this, and everyone found it loathsome. The king again addressed Mōun, “By your supernatural powers you have shown me the form of bad fortune. What is this beast capable of?” Mōun answered with a smile, “Has your majesty not heard the saying ‘Good or ill

fortune has no door. They respond to a person's invitation.'¹⁷ If a sovereign is not in possession of the Way, then he will bring about the demise of the kingdom. If the lords are not in possession of the Way, they will cause the castle to be lost. If officials and commoners are not in possession of the Way, they will not be able to maintain themselves. That is what this beast is capable of." Not wanting to hear more, King Shō Nei snapped his fingers and commanded, "Well then, this beast cannot be tamed. Take it away immediately!" Laughing derisively, Mōun said, "The foolish ruler has long been inviting misfortune. How can it be taken away? Indulging in sexual licentiousness, the *chūfugimi* has corrupted the women's quarters of the palace. Doing as he pleases with the reins of power, Minister of State Ri Yū pursued and struck down Princess Nei, then stealing an infant from a commoner, created the deception that the *chūfugimi* gave birth to it. Many among the populace have been gritting their teeth, and many lords and yellow-capped officials [*kōbō*] have been resentful. This misfortune has already been brought. How can it be taken away?" Before he had even finished speaking, the beast which had appeared weak suddenly became enraged. Its eyes glared a deep red with the brightness of a hundred mirrors and it bared its fangs that were like upturned swords. With a great roar it broke its chains, jumping up toward the throne and attacking King Shō Nei. Alarmed and frightened, the king collapsed and breathed his last. Frightened out of her wits the *chūfugimi* turned and tried to escape, but the beast of misfortune would not let her get away. It immediately trampled her feet, bringing her down on her back. Then with its front hoofs on her right leg it gashed her left leg with a ripping sound. Before she could even cry out, her skin was torn from her flesh like ripping in two a bolt of red fabric. The nurse who was by her side, scared senseless, tried to hold the Prince to the side and run away, but it was as if her legs had wilted and she could not even stand up. The beast tore into her buttocks, blood spewing all over. Seeing this, Ri Yū quickly took the Prince in his arms and, jumping over the railing of the roofed corridor, attempted to make a narrow escape. But the beast broke the railing and, with the speed of a bird in flight bit down on Ri Yū's robe. Unsure if he was dreaming, he looked back at the beast and threw the gem in his hand at its face. Fearing the power of the gem, the beast became gentle and, its ears drooping and its head lowered, it backed away. Availing himself of that chance, Ri Yū put the Prince in the breast of his robe and breathlessly escaped out of the Kankai Gate. Then he sprang onto his horse that was tethered there and galloped off toward Haebaru.

¹⁷ This proverb appears in the "Duke Xiang of Lu" chapter, twenty-third year, of the *Zuo Zhuan*.

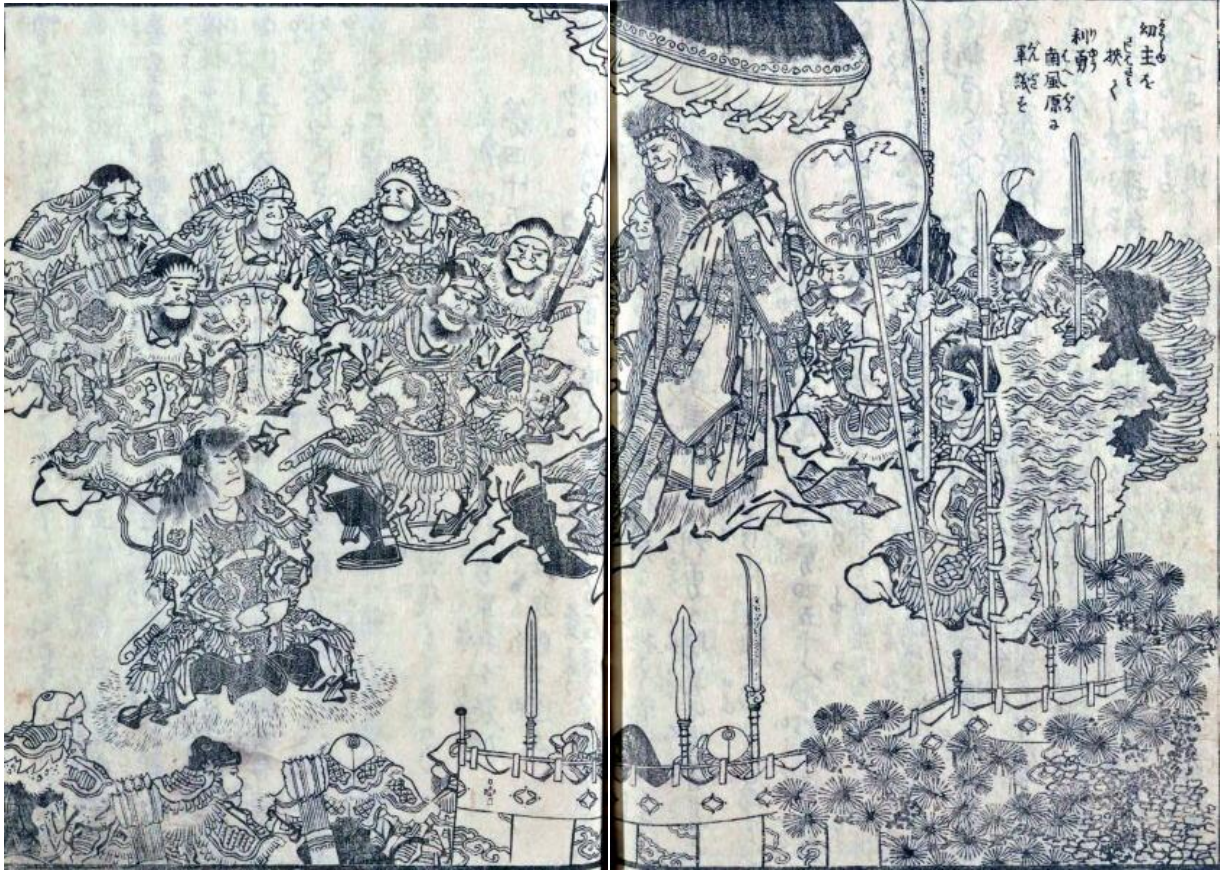
At that time, the blood drained from the faces of the Council of Three and all of the lords, captains, senior pages, and junior pages. They tried to escape, but their limbs had grown numb and they were unable to move at all. Shivering with fright and with no other recourse, they shouted, “Reverend Master, please save us!” Tucking up his robe, Mōun dashed up to the throne and, stroking his yellowish beard roared with laughter. “The time has come! King Shō Nei was an imbecile and did not govern according to the Way. Seventeen thousand eight hundred and two years of correct rule and twenty-five generations of Tenson rulers have now come to an end. Why do you not understand? Could that lascivious *chūfugimi* really have given birth at age fifty? The infant that Ri Yū had in the breast of his robe when he escaped was one they sought among the commoners, killing the mother and stealing her child, then deceiving the king to accept him as prince. Anciently in China, the throne was yielded to one with virtue to govern the realm.¹⁸ My virtue is strong, so I should take over from the Tenson rulers. Those of you who follow me shall live, while those who resist me shall die on the spot. Are you still perplexed? Aren’t you afraid of misfortune? Won’t you follow me from darkness into light, enjoy life together with me, and pass good fortune on to your posterity? Answer now!” Hearing this, everyone kowtowed, and one of them fearfully arose and said obsequiously, “Your powers in the Way of wizardry are great, and you have been entrusted with the great work of Heaven. Who would not wish to be your subject? Though our talents are insufficient to be your mainstay, we shall render whatever service we can. Please, take your place on the throne.” Then picking up the royal gem that Ri Yū had thrown, he presented it to Mōun, who was greatly pleased and beckoned for the beast of misfortune to approach. It did so, wagging its tail as if it had been completely tamed, and immediately spat out a gem. Mōun acted surprised to see that, and proudly announced, “This is undoubtedly the gem that Princess Nei lost. Now that I am on the throne, both gems—Ryū and Kyū, *yin* and *yang*—bring each other to completion. This seems like an auspicious sign from Heaven. From this time henceforth, all of you honor me with the title Holy Sovereign Mōun.” Placing the two gems in a crystal bowl, he displayed them to those assembled, who shouted “banzai!” This was all something that Mōun had planned from the beginning, using sorcery to steal one of the gems and now having this beast spit it out, thereby leading the people astray.

Now then, having received the felicitations of his subjects, Mōun gave a simple burial to the remains of the king and the *chūfugimi*, then said, “Though Ri Yū is taking care of the false

¹⁸ This apparently refers to the three sage kings: Yao yielded to Shun, who in turn yielded to Yu.

Prince and has sequestered himself in the castle at Haeburu, there is nothing to fear. But the only one we cannot make light of is Lord Tō Shōju. He was Mō Kokutei's confidant and had made a secret pact with Lady Ren's younger sister, the *myōbu* Manazuru and, using deceptive flattery with Ri Yū, made himself seem indispensable in attacking the Middle Castle. Colluding with Sa Kokukitsu, he tried to save the Princess and Lady Ren, but when things did not go as planned and Lady Ren committed suicide, he took her head and attempted to trick Ri Yū into calling off the siege so that the Princess could escape, but Ri Yū did not comply. And so Shōju took the head of Manazuru, who had already been slain and, passing it off as that of the Princess, garnered undue merit and was promoted to lord. Because of my all-seeing eye I was aware of all this, but since I had other ideas I did not challenge him, and only feigned ignorance. Now when Ri Yū hears that I have acceded to the throne, he will make Shōju his general and, under the banner of the infant king, will assemble an army and draw up plans to attack the palace within a matter of days. However, Shōju will not submit to Li Yū, and will not give his all for him, so their plan will not meet with quick success. Even if Shōju manages to lead a few troops against us, what could it amount to? And the likes of Kumagimi of Kitadani are all nothing more than the blind following the blind, and present no serious challenges. But one serious obstacle that remains is Princess Nei. Now I intend to send fifty junior pages who are skilled in arms, along with the beast to add support. With the beast of misfortune leading the way, you'll soon find where the Princess is hiding. Hurry and be on your way!" Having received this order, the junior pages armed themselves with swords and lances and, under the lead of the beast of misfortune, made a quick exit.

At that moment, Minister of State Ri Yū, holding the false prince, had escaped on horseback to Haeburu Castle, which was in his own domain, and made preparations for confinement there. On that same day Tō Shōju, who also lived in Haeburu, had pleaded illness in order not to attend the ceremony at the palace to designate the new heir to the throne. That day, at the hour of the monkey [4:00 p.m.], Ri Yū sent a messenger by horse informing Shōju of the death of the King and the *chūfugimi*. Messengers were sent three times, inviting him to come to the castle. Shōju was greatly alarmed and, assembling the forty or fifty men under his command, headed for Haeburu Castle where he met with Ri Yū. First of all they sent a spy to the royal palace to learn of the situation there. The spy came racing back the next morning, reporting "Mōun has taken the throne, calling himself the Holy Sovereign of Chūzan. Fearing his sorcery



neither the Council of Three nor the lords will make any move against him, and are all compliant.” Hearing this, Ri Yū was dumbfounded and at a loss for what to do. But he decided to circulate a letter with an enclosed cock’s feather¹⁹ to the lords in Chūzan, Sannan, and Sanhoku to enlist loyalist troops as quickly as possible to defeat Mōun and return the Prince both to the palace and to the throne. However, whether out of enmity toward Ri Yū for his many years of evil deeds or out of worry that their families might perish because of the beast of misfortune, few responded to his call to arms. Only soldiers from the eleven *magiri* of Ōzato, Mahashi, Sajiki, Tamakusuku, Chinen, Gushikami, Mafumi, Kiyabu, Toyokusuku, and Koroku reluctantly responded. Then making Shōju his general and Kumagimi guardian of the false prince, Ri Yū did nothing but fortify his castle with a deep moat and firm walls to fend off the beast of misfortune. Shōju had his own ideas and did not face the campaign against Mōun with full resolve. Becoming irate when days passed with no activity, Ri Yū put up signs in each *magiri* recruiting loyalists to defeat Mōun.

¹⁹ Signifying urgency.

Chapter Forty-Five

With the false prince as a prop, Ri Yū recruits soldiers,
In a bind at the monument at Akase, the Princess meets Tametomo.

At dusk on the second day of the ninth month, Princess Nei appeared to have been beaten by delinquent youths on the stone bridge at Koegu, but she was unexpectedly saved by the spirit of Shiranui and, after a narrow escape, made her way up Onnagatake. At dawn on the following day she happened to meet Assistant Captain Sa Kokukitsu who, having cut down Ri Yū's numerous soldiers at the Middle Castle, had barely escaped into the mountains and gone into hiding. They were overjoyed to see each other. The Princess wept when she heard of Lady Ren's fate and Manazuru's death defending her. Sa Kokukitsu also spoke of Tsuru, Kame, and their mother, adding, "On my way here I heard from a passerby that Lady Ren was slain yesterday. If that is true, how lamentable it would be." Before he even finished speaking, the Princess's tears were falling like rain as she bent over in grief. This time Shiranui's spirit must not have possessed her, for her voice and manners were the same as usual. As Sa Kokukitsu was saying various things to console her, a couple who looked like hunters suddenly came by and, stooping down next to the princess, said, "This mountain is the highest peak in Ryukyu, and it has no human traffic. It is a good place to hide from the world, but there are poisonous serpents and savage beasts. We are hunters who live near Mount Yomudani. Please come to our house, and stay there as long as you like. We'll gladly give you hiding." Since they appeared to know so much about her and had extended a sincere invitation, it did not seem right to conceal things from them, so she signaled with her eyes to Sa Kokukitsu, who caught her meaning. Turning to the couple, he explained, "As you guessed, she who is before you is Princess Nei. Because of Ri Yū and Mōun—favored subjects of her step-mother, the *chūfugimi*—she has no place in the world now, but remains hopeful that good fortune will yet come her way. At any rate, please provide her with a hiding place. Once she is able to return to society, you will be amply rewarded." The couple gladly took off their straw raincoats and, putting them on their guests, led them to the humble cottage in Mount Yomudani. They lived in very modest circumstances, but they saw to the needs of their guests attentively, preparing meals and treating them warmly. But beginning with that night, Sa Kokukitsu's wounds began to ache and he contracted tetanus. By the middle of the tenth month, his wounds had partially healed. The couple made their living by

going up into the mountains every day, the husband to hunt wild animals and the wife to gather firewood. Sometimes she would also go to the seashore to gather various seaweeds. One day they came running back with news for Princess Nei and Sa Kokukitsu. “Have you not yet heard of the situation at the palace? Yesterday when the Council of Three and all of the lords had gathered at the Dragon Palace to install as heir a Prince born to the *chūfugimi*, Mōun used his usual sorcery to call in a beast of misfortune, a dreadful creature that killed the king and the *chūfugimi*. Then Mōun ascended to the throne and, calling himself Holy Sovereign, assumed control of Chūzan, Sannan, and Sanhoku. Minister of State Ri Yū barely managed to escape to Haeburu with the infant Prince, where he is conferring with Shōju, Kumagimi, and others to recruit an army from various parts of the country to destroy Mōun and put the Prince on the throne. However, both wise and foolish people fear the beast of misfortune, and have not responded to the call to arms. At his wit’s end, Ri Yū posted signs in each *magiri* hoping to recruit loyalists directly, but the royal gem that had been lost is now in Mōun’s hands, and there are few who do not follow him. Now Mōun has ordered fifty junior pages to lead the beast of misfortune here to destroy the Princess. As a couple we shall try to forestall them, but as long as you remain here you are in great danger. Quickly go down to the seashore to the west of this mountain, and you will certainly be able to escape mortal danger.” Having said that much, they immediately ran back outside. Hearing of her father’s demise, the Princess was already wailing. Sa Kokukitsu helped her get up and tried to console her, but he too was shedding bitter tears of vexation. Nevertheless, mustering his resolve he urged her to escape quickly. But she would not move, and said, “My having been born as a princess has brought nothing but unhappiness, and I can no longer bear it. It is all the same whether I live or am killed. What use would my survival be to the world? It would only be because I want to plead my innocence and be pardoned. But now that my mother has been slain because of a false accusation, and hearing that my father has also perished, why should I value my own life? If I were to remain in this world like the shell of a locust, I would only spend my days brooding. There is nothing for it but to wait here until Mōun’s soldiers arrive and perish by the sword. How could I escape?” At the top of his voice, Sa Kokukitsu said reprovingly, “I hardly know what to say. Filial devotion would be to defeat the insurgent Mōun and cleanse the country, would it not? I hear that anciently in Japan the consort



of Emperor Chūai,¹ Okinagatarashihime no Mikoto (Empress Jingū),² led an army herself and subdued the three Korean kingdoms.³ Do you suppose that only a man can vanquish an enemy? That's very disappointing!" Then assisting the Princess, he ran out of the house, at the same time praising the couple who had helped them. "Our hosts have to struggle just to eke out a living, and yet they treated us with such sincere devotion. At a time like this when we hear that even ministers and lords are ignobly submitting to Mōun, it's very gratifying to see people with such a stalwart disposition." Nodding in agreement, the Princess said, "I think so too. They left saying they would try to stall the enemy, but I wonder if they'll end up being slain." They both looked back, but the hunters' ramshackle cottage had vanished, and only the ancient pine tree remained. They thought it very mysterious. Had they been mountain gods all along? The abode where they had lived these many days was gone, with only the shade left under the old pine tree. When they

¹ 149-200; r. 192-200.

² 169-269; ruled as regent 201-269.

³ That is, Baekje, Gogureo, and Silla.

realized that, for a moment they bowed down reverentially, then ran down the west side of the mountain toward the inlet.

Just then the sea and mountains reverberated with the din of trumpets, reed horns, gongs, and drums as Mōun's fifty men came in pursuit, heavily armed and shouting "Don't let Princess Nei escape!" The odious beast was running ahead of the men. The Princess and Sa Kokukitsu were already in mortal danger. Looking back he said, "If I don't sacrifice my life, you'll be the victim of that evil creature's fangs. Run as fast as you can!" Having drawn his sword even before finishing speaking, he faced the beast of misfortune, which charged at him with a loud roar, trying to knock him down. Sa Kokukitsu parried, nimbly jumping aside. He repeated this maneuver two or three times, each time thrusting his sword from behind. But strangely, his sword only broke into pieces, and his partially healed wounds again opened all at once, bleeding profusely. He felt faint and stumbled down to the ground. Baring its fangs, the beast of misfortune cut into Sa Kokukitsu's knee and thigh, shaking its head violently. But Sa Kokukitsu held fast to the beast's head, twisting it with all his might. Both man and beast were groaning. Then the insurgent soldiers came running, thrusting a lance into Sa Kokukitsu's side and piercing him through. How pitiful, but how remarkable that such a brave hero should meet such an end!

In the meantime Princess Nei, though not valuing her own life, did not wish Sa Kokukitsu's valiant death to have been in vain and ran over eight hundred yards down the path, finally arriving at the seashore. Quite unexpectedly two boys, apparently brothers, had hurriedly rowed a rowboat to shore and, helping the princess to board, busied themselves with oars and rudder, rowing out to sea with the speed of a bird in flight. Mōun's traitorous soldiers ran after them gasping for breath, rubbing their fists and shouting "Bring that boat back!" But the only answer was the sound of waves. The boat was finally out of sight. The beast of misfortune looked far out over the water, but made no attempt to swim after them. Thus the Princess miraculously escaped the jaws of death. Turning to the boys, she asked, "Whose children are you, that you should save me from danger? Tell me your names." Kneeling even as they worked the oars, one of them said, "We brothers are the sons of Mō Kokutei, Lord of the Middle Castle. My name is Tsuru, and my younger brother is Kame. On the day when our father, Kokutei, was slain, our relative Sa Kokukitsu kindly helped us as well as our mother to escape. We hid in the mountains by Koegu for two or three days, but couldn't remain there longer. Mother was in her last month of pregnancy, and we were carrying her in a palanquin. We had escaped beyond

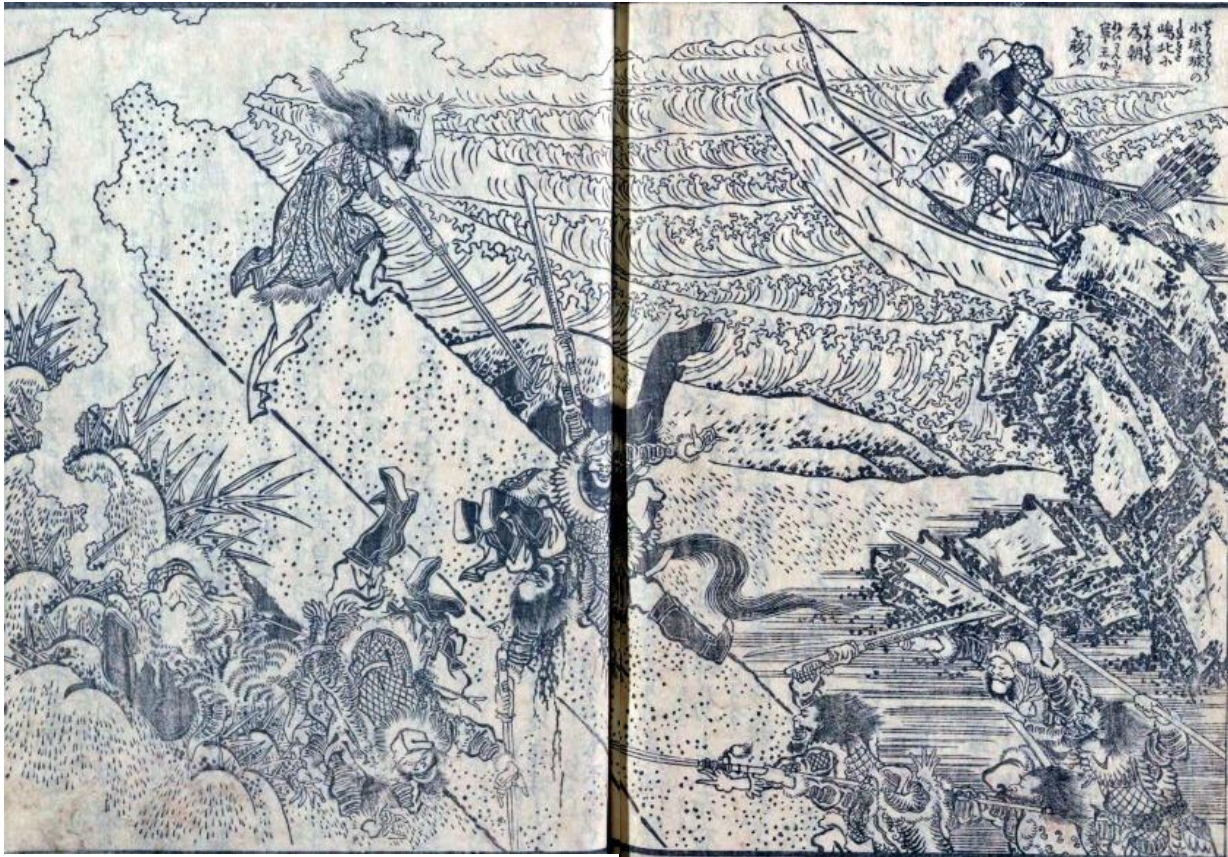
Ōgimi and Haneji, but when we were crossing the desolate plain west of Kibu, our mother, Niigaki, suddenly began labor, and we were at a loss for what to do. I ran off toward the Fuzō River to buy medicine and my brother ran after me to stop me. While we were away from our mother's side, a sinister old woman killed her, stealing the infant from her womb. It would be impossible to express the grief we felt. We were especially pained at not knowing where the enemy had gone. The next morning, we committed our mother's remains to the water, and as we sat facing the Fuzō River, the spirit of our late father, Mō Kokutei, appeared to us. Again in our dream that night he appeared to us, leading us to the seashore and instructing us in detail, "Both of you remain here for a time and save Princess Nei, taking her by boat to Little Ryukyu and hiding her near the stone monument of Akase in Shimakita. The monument of Akase was erected by the founder of the Tenson dynasty. I previously went there on assignment and made an offering, so I was able to see its miraculous efficacy first hand. If the Princess manages to go there and offer prayers at the monument, ultimately misfortune will be done away with and she will be met with good fortune. When a rowboat drifts into this inlet, then you'll know that the Princess will soon arrive." Then he described your appearance and what you would be wearing. Both of us had the same dream, alike in every detail. Thus, we remained there, every day looking out over the waters as we waited for the boat to come drifting by, and this morning it arrived at the shore. We were excited to know that you would come soon. We have finally been able to accomplish our purpose." Tears were in the boys' eyes as they finished their response. The Princess was deeply moved upon hearing their tale, and said, "How devoted Lord Mō was! Though falsely accused and executed, his spirit still saved me. And your filial devotion is unmatched in this world. Such a father has such sons. What is pitiable is Niigaki's unnatural death. Though abandoned by people and by the world, my fate is not as lamentable as hers. Even my father the King, who commanded wealth, fame, and dominion of the three provinces, could not escape misfortune. His throne was usurped by a traitorous sorcerer, he met his end by the fangs of a beast, and he was buried without proper entombment. What a horrifying turn of fate! And ever since escaping from the Middle Castle, the kind devotion of Lady Ren, Manazuru, and Sa Kokukitsu was repaid with their untimely deaths." She related events in detail from the beginning up to the sincerity of the hunter couple at Mount Yomudani, all the time wiping her tears. Then she added, "I wonder if the hunter couple at Mount Yomudani, as well as your

departed parents, were not somehow dwelling with me, that even after death they should save me.” Then moaning, she bowed down in the boat. The brothers, too, shed tears.

Now from the shore beneath Mount Yomidani to Little Ryukyu is a journey of at least three days by boat, but their craft advanced with the speed of an arrow over the calm waters, and they arrived at Shimakita in Little Ryukyu at the break of the following day. Though they had heard that there were seven *magiri* and over two hundred villages, they went ashore and looked about to find that they were in a remote area of the island, far from any village and unfrequented by anyone. The shoreline was overgrown with thick reeds through which a breeze from the sea was blowing. There was a single path from the inlet, leading from the shore about ten steps to the stone monument of Akase. About nine yards in height, it had the shape of a round pillar, and the image of a beautiful woman had been carved into it so exquisitely that she appeared to be alive. The monument was said to have existed from the founding of the country, and does not have the appearance of having been created by human hands. Except for soft rushes and some windswept pines, there is nothing around it, not even a speck of dust, and it is impossible to describe the feeling of antiquity that it inspires. From that very morning, the Princess began praying before the monument while Tsuru and Kame gathered seaweed, nuts, and berries, offering them to the Princes and partaking of them themselves to stave off hunger. After dark they sat leaning against the pine, spending the night without lying down. Two days passed in that manner. On the third day there was a commotion among water fowl as they arose in flight. Observing this, the Princess said to Tsuru and Kame, knitting her brows, “Boats never come here, and any village is far away, so it’s odd that the birds in this inlet should be so agitated. It seems that Mōun’s traitorous soldiers have followed us here.” No sooner had she spoken than fifty villainous soldiers, led by the island’s chieftain, came charging toward them, surrounding them and vying with each other to take the Princess alive. It was all so sudden that they could not possibly have made it to their boat, and they realized that they could not escape. Tsuru and Kame bravely tried to keep the advancing enemy at bay, brandishing their swords. Though dismissed as mere boys, they managed to cut down five or six of the men, but their young arms were soon exhausted and they were unable to stop the onslaught, finally being taken captive. The thug soldiers grew bolder and were about to capture the Princess when she underwent a change in countenance. Throwing advancing soldiers to the ground on both sides, before they could get up she drew a sword and cut them down. Seeing her arise with such fierce vigor, the men were alarmed, saying “This is



just like what we heard before, that the Princess is possessed by a deity and has gone mad. Hurry, bring the beast of misfortune here and have it take her down!” The rear ranks shouted their affirmation and released the evil creature. Then with drumbeats and battle cries, men and beast combined forces and came charging toward her. Thinking nothing of it, Princess Nei again wielded her sword, but as she tried to thrust it into the beast of misfortune, the blade snapped off and she was left with only the hilt in her hand. Thinking that the end had come, she stepped back and jumped behind the Akase monument to shield her from the attack. Before she could even take a breath, the beast came charging in all its fury. Supposing that the image of the woman carved on the face of the stone was the Princess, the creature bit at it, at which point the monument began to tip, finally falling over with a deafening sound, pinning down half of the monster beneath its weight. Many of the soldiers also perished, their skulls crushed, backs broken, or flattened beneath the stone. How strange that the Akase monument, having stood for seventeen thousand eight hundred and two years, weathering violent wind and rain with no sign of corrosion or tilting, should of its own accord fall on the beast of misfortune. Though one might say it was a latter degenerate age, yet the virtue and power of the founding god must have



resided in the stone. The beast of misfortune struggled trying to get up, but after some time passed it began to foam at the mouth, the froth spreading out like a length of glossy silk. As the foam disappeared, the form of the beast sank into the soil, finally vanishing. Since so many of the advanced troops had been killed by the stone—and since they had lost the beast of misfortune—those in the rear guard were nonplussed now that they could not attack so easily. But if they did not succeed in slaying the Princess—or let her escape—they knew that they were in for a lot of trouble later, so yelling “Take her alive!” thirty or so of them aligned their spears and charged. When the monument fell, the hem of the Princess’s robe was caught beneath it, leaving her unable to move. Since even her sword was broken, she sighed looking up at the sky, thinking that her end had come. But then someone, she knew not who, began shooting arrows from among the thick growth of reeds on the shore. The arrows came thick and fast like locusts, sometimes one arrow taking down two or three men. When eighteen or nineteen of the traitorous soldiers had fallen, those remaining were scared witless, someone shouting “Taking these two boys captive was worth the fight. Let’s not lose our lives trying to capture that odd Princess!” Then taking Tsuru and Kame, they fled.

With a rustling of the reeds a boat pulled up to the shore and a man of imposing stature stepped out. He was seven feet tall with eyes as sharp as those of a wolf and arms as long as those of a monkey. About thirty-seven or -eight years of age, he was wearing torso armor, gauntlets, and shin guards, and a decorated sword was affixed to his side. He cast off the straw raincoat he had been wearing and, using his bow as a cane, deftly jumped off the boat and approached the Princess. Who was he? He was none other than the seventh-generation descendant of Emperor Seiwa, heir to the General of the Military Base and Governor of Mutsu, Lord Minamoto no Yoshiie, and eighth son of the Rokujō Police Lieutenant Tameyoshi, Chinzei Hachirō Tametomo. Immediately recognizing him, the princess called out, “Oh, it’s the young master!” Her voice was not a shade different from that of Shiranui. Forgetting herself, as she hurriedly ran toward him the hem of her robe that was stuck under the stone ripped off. Though she had the voice of his departed wife with whom he had made a pledge,⁴ she had the face of someone else. Thinking it strange that she should be addressing him as her husband, Tametomo gazed at her for a time. On the sixteenth day of the past eighth month his wife had perished as her boat sank in a typhoon, but having received the divine protection of the Sanuki Retired Emperor, he had escaped death and made his way here. An account of this has been given in a previous chapter, and need not be repeated here. To see how these stories come together, I shall ask readers to wait for next year’s installment, and conclude this chapter at this point.

⁴ There is a play on words here with *chigiru* (tear off) and *chigiri* (pledge).

Chapter Forty-Six

On Little Ryukyu, Tametomo repays a debt of gratitude,
In Kakeroma, the princess calls herself Shiranui.

It was on the twentieth day of the tenth month of Angen 2 [1176] during the reign of Takakura-In. On the shore of Little Ryukyu, one of the satellite islands of the Ryukyuan kingdom, Chinzei Hachirō Tametomo saved Princess Nei by shooting down the rebel troops of Mōun. Seeing him, the Princess cried out, “Oh, young master!” her voice being indistinguishable from that of Shiranui, though the face was different. He came to a standstill, looking at her quizzically. The Princess ran toward him, falling down and embracing his feet beneath his dripping straw raincoat, wiping her tears as she said, “You are no doubt unaware of the circumstances here, so it is no wonder that you find this strange. In the storm at sea the past eighth month, in exchange for saving your life I sank to the bottom of the sea, where my body ended up in the belly of a great fish. But my spirit did not perish. It drifted unexpectedly to the desolate shore of an island. This island was in a foreign land where I am unknown, but I have been waiting here for my husband and child. Here I have borrowed the body of one who was like the cast-off shell of a locust. I am so happy to see you safe and sound. In order that you might understand, let me start at the beginning. Don’t you recognize me? The one that my spirit is possessing? In the second year of Kyūju [1155] when you were in Aso, in order to retrieve the crane of a thousand years that had been released by decree of the emperor you secretly crossed over to this land and at the foot of Mount Kyūkyū unexpectedly traded the gem from the giant serpent for that crane. I am that Princess Nei, heir apparent to this kingdom. King Shō Nei was foolish, rejecting his own flesh and blood and executing loyal ministers. Because of the *chūfugimi*’s lasciviousness and the evil craftiness of the Grand Minister Ri Yū, the people were estranged and resentful, but those in power were quite unaware of that. Led astray by Mōun’s sorcery, they slew Mō Kokutei at the Dragon Palace, killed Lady Ren in the *magiri* of Kuba, and as they pursued the Princess, Niigaki, Manazuru, and Sa Kokukitsu all fell victim to them. At the stone bridge in Koegu when the Princess was about to be slain, I momentarily possessed her, slaughtering those delinquent youths who were her assailants, and then enduring untold hardships, waited for you here. The Princess, being very filial and of discreet disposition, was designated as heir apparent, but despised by the *chūfugimi* and slandered by Ri Yū and Mōun,

she was soon abandoned. Would it not be pitiful if she had fallen under the blades of those delinquent youths? Though I am embarrassed to say so, she has reached the age of thirty without the touch of any man. Though I have the visage of the Princess, if you have not forgotten the vows we exchanged on those many nights when I comforted you in your sleeplessness, then let me call you my husband, and together let us seek our lost child, bring order to the chaos of this land, bringing peace to it so that even the humblest of its people will look up to you as a god. This unexpected meeting leaves many questions unanswered and much yet to say, and what I have told you may seem incoherent, but there may also be others who can tell you of these things.” Then she dissolved in tears. Deeply moved by the faithful words of his departed wife, Tametomo sat down on a stone at the water’s edge and said, “Did I ever think that I would exchange words with my dearly departed Shiranui, whose remains sank to the bottom of the sea? This is truly a peculiar reunion. In the tempest on the sixteenth day of this past eighth month when my rudder broke and my boat was destroyed, I thought that my fate was sealed, but the gracious aid of the Sanuki Retired Emperor I was taken care of by goblins. Unsure whether it was dream or reality I drifted on the waves for several days until on the second day of the ninth month I reached the shore of Kakeroma, a satellite island of Ryukyu. And Princess Nei, whom you have possessed, apparently was also here that day. Thanks to the kindness of the islanders, I was able to obtain food and lodging, but when I thought that not only Sutemaru but also Takama, Isohagi, and Kiheiji had perished and I alone remained alive, the world seemed to offer no reassurance and I was losing all hope. But the spirit of the New Retired Emperor bolstered my spirits, saying that without knowing whether Sutemaru was alive or dead it was unbecoming for a manly man to choose death, and so I did not end my life. From what I learned from Kiheiji when I came to this country previously, I was able to understand what the islanders were saying, and realized how they tried to distance themselves from King Shō Nei’s foolishness and how they were weary of the bad government of Mōun and Ri Yū. As I advised and instructed them, they were greatly supportive of me and placed their trust in me. I could not abandon the people of Uken, Yuro, and Tokushima who were united in asking me to remain for a long time in this country, defeat Mōun and Ri Yū, and save them from their distress. Here or ten thousand leagues away it’s the same: crooked people and traitorous ministers act as if they owned the place. The thought that Mōun and Ri Yū are no less villainous than Kiyomori makes my blood boil. As I have asked about the situation in Chūzan and have heard of the Princess’s filial devotion, of

Lady Ren's sad fate, of Mō Kokutei's lone loyalty, of Manazuru's intensity of spirit, as well as of the lots of Niigaki, Sa Kokukitsu, Tsuru, and Kame, I find it all the more pitiable. When I think of the time back in the Kyūju era when because of the benevolence of Princess Nei I easily obtained the crane and returned, and then to hear how she was tormented by her step-mother and nefarious ministers, making her life a living hell, how could I be considered faithful or righteous if I did not save her? But with no knowledge of the land, I could not very well act rashly. Just when it seemed that I might not be of any use and that I might just end up being an encumbrance of I tried to lead the people of Kakeroma, I was wondering what I should do. Then at daybreak this morning a commotion broke out among the islanders, with people running in all directions. I asked the island chieftain what was going on. With a face bluer than the sea and with goose pimples, for a time he was unable to say anything. When I pressed him again, he calmed down somewhat and said, 'You are not yet aware, but last night as islanders had set out on the water to take in their nets by moonlight, when they rowed toward Shimakita on Little Ryukyu, they overheard soldiers on five or six boats saying that the King had uttered some careless phrase, and that as a result a fierce monster called the beast of misfortune was led in. It took his life and that of the *chūfugimi*. Since that was a misfortune they themselves brought on, that can't be helped. But it is the Princess who is to be pitied. Led to Little Ryukyu by Lord Mō's boys Tsuru and Kame, she had sequestered herself by the stone monument at Akase, but Reverend Master Mōun knew of this and sent a great number of junior pages along with the beast of misfortune, commanding them to destroy the Princess. They would send a boat to reconnoiter, then they would put the beast ashore to attack while maintaining forces at sea. Thus the Princess's life would stand no chance. People pitied her, but knew that if they spoke ill of Mōun, the beast would know of it and not only they, but their wives and children would be torn apart. The beast could go anywhere in an instant, whether through fire or water. The fishermen, overhearing what a fearsome creature it was, left their nets and rowed ashore.' They all spoke disparagingly about Mōun and Ri Yū. What would they do if the beast of misfortune showed up? Arguing that they should flee to Uken or Tokushima, they were packing their belongings onto boats and breathlessly running about. I inquired about the location of Little Ryukyu, and giving it some thought said, 'Then the Princess has no way to escape. Come what may, you need not be alarmed. I'll go there myself. If what you heard is true, I'll save the Princess and kill the beast of misfortune.' Then taking my straw raincoat that was hanging under the eaves and with my bow

and arrows in hand, I jumped into a boat carved from a single log and, powerfully rowing with the well-worn oars I cut through the waves at dawn against headwinds and strong current. When I finally rowed to this shore, from among the thick reeds I calculated the range of my shots and then rained arrows down on the traitorous troops. My intention was to save you speedily and repay the kindness you had shown me. But then I saw that the uncanny ferocious beast was crushed beneath this stone monument and disappeared into the earth, and realized that this was no ordinary matter.” The Princess was pleased to hear such an exclamation and said, “This is called the Akase monument, and was erected by the distant ancestor of the Tenson rulers of the country, in no way inferior to the Inverted Halberd of Heaven¹ or the Keystone of Kashima² in Japan. Since it is a sacred treasure, it has such miraculous qualities. Now that the beast of misfortune has been destroyed, henceforth it should be called the Monument of Good Fortune rather than Akase. It is too bad that your boat didn’t arrive sooner, so that Tsuru and Kame would not have been taken captive. Those two are very young, but their loyal devotion is equal to that of their father, Mō Kokutei. Their mother, Niigaki, suffered an untimely death, and it is regrettable that they were taken captive because of me.” Relating what had happened, she sighed. To console her, Tametomo said, “No, you needn’t grieve about that. Even if such loyal and filial boys are taken captive, because of their youth they are not likely to be decapitated on the spot, and even if they are bound in an impregnable fortress, as long as they are alive I’ll find a way to rescue them. But on a lonely island like this, if we are again surrounded by enemy forces we’ll be in for trouble. Hurry and get in the boat, and we’ll go to Kakeroma. We need to discuss plans.” The Princess knitted her brows. “I hear that Kakeroma is a very small place with a rocky shore. It would be quite dangerous. They say that in Haeburu Ri Yū and Shōju are protecting the newborn Prince, and that they have put up notices in each *magiri* recruiting loyalists to destroy Mōun. Young master, you should respond to that by going there and marshalling Ri Yū’s troops to defeat Mōun, then after that you can judge the severity of Ri Yū’s crimes. Then the country will be at peace. Isn’t that so?” Tametomo nodded. “Mencius remarked that Boyi ‘would not stand in a bad prince’s court, nor speak with a bad man,’ but even if one does not go so far as Hui

¹ *Ama-tsu-sakahoko*, a halberd stuck on the summit of Mount Kirishima in Hyūga province, said to be Izanagi’s spear from the Floating Bridge of Heaven.

² *Kashima no kanameishi*, a sacred stone at Kashima Shrine in Hitachi province. Many legends attribute miraculous powers to it.

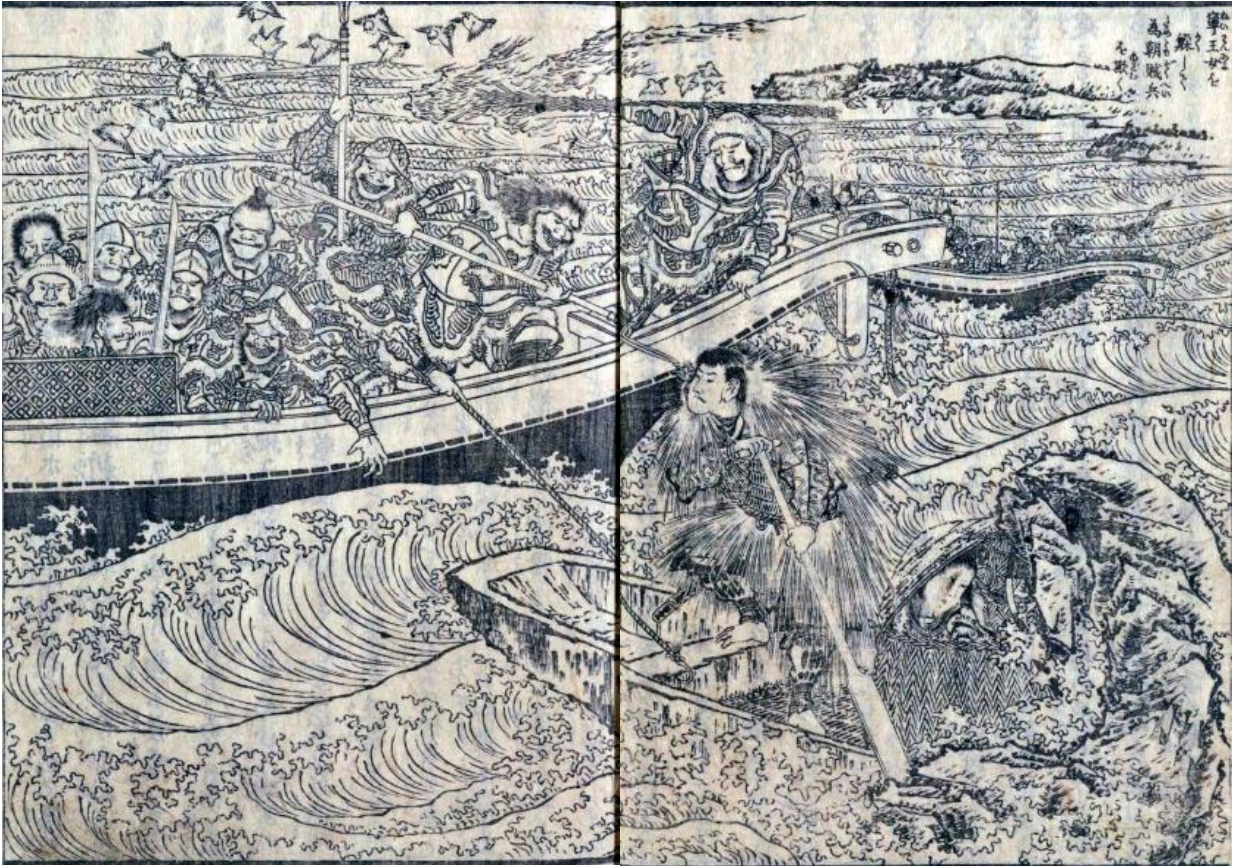
of Liuxia,³ if I work with a sordid type like Ri Yū and am able to destroy Mōun, that is not how I would prefer to do things, but as they say, ‘to accomplish great things one cannot be fastidious about minor discretions.’⁴ Even if the *chūfugimi* was your step-mother, the Prince that was born is in the Tenson line and thus your younger brother, isn’t he? Therefore, my going to Haeburu is for the sake of you two siblings, and not to give aid to Ri Yū. ‘To see righteousness but not perform it is to lack courage.’⁵ I wish to be pure-hearted!” With that he twanged his bow and stood up. “Hey, Shiranui. If your spirit is present, please listen. Even if you borrow the Princess’s body, what I am seeing now is not Shiranui. So if I were to call you wife and you were to call me husband, we could not avoid the accusation of illicit relations. After we have accomplished our aims, the time will come when we can be called a couple. Don’t resent me as cold-hearted, but we cannot share a bed.” She could find no words to respond to the reasonableness of his manly discourse, though it seemed to go against her wishes. Tametomo helped the Princess board the boat. Pointing far out over the sea, he said, “Mōun has sent reconnaissance boats over there, and they would be sure to stop us. It would be easy to disperse them, but then warships would come as reinforcement and we’d only be looking for trouble. This bamboo fish basket will be your best hiding place for a while. Hurry and get in.” After she was inside, he covered the basket with nets and, assuming the guise of a fisherman with his straw raincoat over his collar and a sedge hat on his head he began rowing toward Kakeroma. The sun was casting its last rays over the water and mists partially concealed the wavelets. A mirage like a red castle appeared over the water, connecting sea and sky around a coral reef. The reason that in later ages Little Ryukyu came to be known as Ōshima after the island of the same name in Izu was to honor Tametomo’s deceased wife.

Just then, five or six reconnaissance swift boats came charging toward them, bringing them to a stop. Pointing halberds at him and glaring, they demanded, “Where are you going in that boat? It’s suspicious that you should wait until sunset and then sneak away from Little Ryukyu. Haven’t you planned this to help Princess Nei escape? Let’s inspect what you’ve got there in that boat!” As they tossed hooks into his boat and began to pull it close, without a trace

³ This passage appears in the “Kongsun Chou, I” chapter of *Mencius*. James Legge’s translation continues: “Hui of Liu-hsia was not ashamed to serve and impure prince, nor did he think it low to be an inferior officer.” *The Works of Mencius*, vol. 2 of *Chinese Classics* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1895), 206-7.

⁴ A line from the “Xiang Yu benji” chapter of *Shiji*.

⁵ From the “Wei zheng” chapter of *The Analects*.



of consternation Tametomo said, “I set out from Kakeroma to harpoon large fish but had no success, so I’m headed back empty-handed. There’s no need for suspicion. As you can see this boat has a shallow bottom with no place to hide anyone. Please let me go.” Before he had finished speaking the men started yelling, “That fish basket is big enough to hide someone. Remove its lid and show us what’s inside!” Tametomo answered apologetically, “It’s taboo among fishermen to show the inside of one’s fish basket while on the water, otherwise there will be no catch the next day. I ask you to pardon me.” “It’s suspicious that you won’t show us what’s inside. What’s more, you don’t look like a fisherman from Kakeroma. You must be hiding something.” Standing on the prow of their boat, one aggressive soldier poked his halberd right in the middle of the basket. Making every effort not to let his alarm show, Tametomo put his hand over the basket and muttered “That’s very inconsiderate of you to damage the tuna that I rarely get to catch.” One more stepped up and was about to poke the basket again, but lost his footing and fell headlong into the sea. That created a commotion with everyone scrambling to rescue him. Other boats arrived to help, tossing boards and ropes into the water and barking all kinds of commands. Tametomo took advantage of the opportunity to pull the hooks out of his boat and

row away without looking back. After the soldiers managed to pull the drowning man onto their boat and get the water out of his lungs, they noticed that the fishing boat had escaped into the distance. Greatly surprised, they were about to go in pursuit again, but one soldier supposing himself to be wise dissuaded them, saying, “If that guy had hidden the Princess in that basket, when the halberd pierced it there would have been some sign. But there was no reaction, no cry of pain, so it’s not worth our suspicion. If we uselessly go after him and in the meantime something really happens, what could we do about it? We should consider our movements carefully.” Everyone followed his advice and they remained where they were.

Though the light of the rising moon complicated a stealthy escape, Tametomo rowed over more than three leagues until his arms tired. Looking back he could see that the enemy was not in pursuit, and finally feeling relieved, he removed the nets covering the basket and asked, “Didn’t the halberd cut you? How is your wound?” Princess Nei’s head appeared and she said, “It’s not a deep wound. It cut into my calf, but I knew that if I cried out we wouldn’t be able to escape.” Taking her hand, Tametomo helped her out of the basket, then he applied to her wound some salve that he had with him, taking good care of her. Then he said, “When those thug soldiers poked the halberds into the basket, I resolved that if we were unable to escape I’d jump on their boat and cut down as many as I could, piling the corpses in the bottom of their boat. But since you didn’t cry out, I supposed that the wound wasn’t deep, so I determined not to let my state of mind show, and we escaped the jaws of death. We barely made it.” They were glad for each other’s safety, and continued on to Kakeroma. When they reached its shore, they found the islanders—young and old, men and women—standing there awaiting his return. Seeing the boat pull up to the shore, they all fired questions at him. “What happened there? Won’t the beast of misfortune run over the waves and come here?” Smiling, Tametomo replied, “All of you can put your minds at ease. Through the spirit of the Tenson rulers that evil beast was crushed by the Akase monument, and while still alive sank into the earth. It will do no more harm. Princess Nei was surrounded by rebel soldiers who were intent on slaying her, but from among the reeds I rained arrows down on them, killing them and rescuing her. So please be united in taking good care of her. She sustained some light wounds.” Then he helped her get up on the shore, whereupon the islanders, full of joy, repeatedly kowtowed right there on the sand. Then they said to Tametomo, “All of us on the thirty-six satellite islands enjoy much abundance, and that is all because of the Princess’s compassion. Who would not think so? Even if Mōun punishes us with

floods and fire, our feelings for her will not change. Truly, the situation in the world is very unstable. If she had not encountered such adversity, she would now occupy the Middle Castle and would never have come to a lonely island. This is more than we deserve.” Then they cleaned up the island chieftain’s house and took the Princess and Tametomo inside, offering them grilled shrimp and red saké, sparing no efforts to see to their comfort. Then Tametomo said to Princess Nei, “City people are fickle and flattering, and what they say never reflects their true feelings. Country people are honest to a fault and reliable. As it is written, ‘fortitude and simple modesty are close to benevolence.’⁶ Don’t you agree? Right now you seem to have found a safe place, but Mōun’s sorcery includes the ability to know what is happening a thousand leagues away, so he will seek ways to send soldiers here too, won’t he? That would be even more dangerous. I have here clothing belonging to Shiranui that was stored in the boat when we left Japan as a couple. They got wet in the brine, but you could wear these and disguise yourself as a wandering woman. Tomorrow morning I’ll set out for Haeburu and confer with Ri Yū. When the time seems right, you could be taken into the castle. I hope you will approve.” Then producing the Japanese kimono and damask sash that were mementos of his wife,⁷ he handed them to the Princess, who was very pleased. “I already thought of myself as the young master’s wife, but now if I wear the clothing of your country, I will also be disguised. There could not be a better gift than this.” Enduring the pain of her wound, she changed clothing, then beckoning to the island chieftain, she smiled and said, “From this day hence I am provisionally the wife of the young master. This is so that the enemy won’t recognize me. So don’t call me Princess Nei any longer. I shall be known as Shiranui.” The chieftain and all the others laughed, answering “Yes ma’am.” After that she dropped “Nei,” and was called Princess Shiranui.

Apparently having heard of Tametomo’s departure to Haeburu, the islanders, both young and old, gathered on the shore the next day to see him off as he unmoored his boat and rowed off in fair winds. They waved their hands until the sail was out of sight.

⁶ From the “Zi Lu” chapter of *The Analects*.

⁷ This is followed by a description of the garments that is larded with word plays.

Chapter Forty-Seven

Tametomo takes a byway to Haebaru,

Rebuffing admonition, Ri Yū closes off the port of Koroku.

In the kingdom of Ryukyu, Kakeroma lies seventy-seven leagues to the northeast of Chūzen province, and it is not easily accessible due to swift currents and high waves. But from his childhood Tametomo was well practiced in negotiating travel on the sea. Thinking nothing of the wind and waves, he arrived after only one day and night. But Mōun's troops were guarding Naha's port, Tomari, and he had heard that the road to Sannan province was closed off. And so he took a northern route, docking in the inlet of Hobu in Sanhoku province. Bearing in mind the geography of the Ryukyu kingdom that he previously gained from Kiheiji's map, he chose to use a byway, a seldom traveled mountain path that woodcutters and cowherd boys told him of. Accompanied through the wilderness only by the chirping of insects and with morning mists and twilight clouds as his guide, he took his lodging in the dewy grass with wind sweeping through his hair. Passing from Imakijin to the foot of Mount Unten, on his right was Nagoka Peak. After crossing Mount Kinbu, he came to a large river. It could be crossed only with difficulty over a pontoon bridge. On the opposite side several boys were catching crabs while singing repeatedly and rhythmically in a loud voice, "A god has come in human guise, The waters of Fuzō are pure. A god has come in human guise, The white sands have turned into rice." Hearing this, Tametomo thought that this must be the Fuzō River. Approaching the riverbank, he said, "Hey, children, I have a question. Which path from here leads to Haebaru?" Regarding him with suspicion, they replied, "If you are going to Haebaru, from Urazoi you should pass through the capital, then going around Ōzato and Mawashi, head in a southwest direction. That's the regular route. But ever since Holy Sovereign Mōun began to rule, new checkpoints have been set up between all *magiri*, and anyone who does not have a matching tally is not allowed passage. From the Middle Castle there is also a path that goes along the eastern beach, but you'd have to cross the Fuzō River over that pontoon bridge, and that wouldn't be allowed either." Nodding, Tametomo said, "Well then, I'll cross this river." Then backing up a short distance, he ran quickly and with a shout leaped over the river, landing on the south side. The children were astounded that someone could simply jump over an eighteen-foot bridge. They marveled: was he a god? Or human?

Leaving the clamorous voices of the children behind, Tametomo hurried along his way, passing Yona Castle. Thinking to find lodging in Tsuchako Village in Sajiki on the south side of the western plain, he entered the gate of an inn there. In that area there is a swift stream called Kawara, and with that as a border, the lords and junior pages in the fifteen *magiri* of Chūzan and Sannan south of Chinen, Ōzato, and Tama Castle all followed Ri Yū. Therefore at the crossroads were notices titled “Recruiting Warriors,” soliciting loyalists to defeat Mōun. They included these words:

On quickly defeating the rebel leader Mōun and returning the Crown Prince to the capital

This rebel sorcerer who appears at unpredictable times released a monstrous beast that killed the former King. Then becoming an enemy of the court he calls himself Holy Sovereign. By his provisional authority he has invaded the three provinces, and his crimes have exceeded the five sins of *Ānantarika-karma*.¹ Accordingly, the Prince has been moved to the south under the protection of various ministers, and an army is being assembled in Haeburu to march north. Strategy has been laid out, but more soldiers are needed. This autumn is indeed a perilous time for our country. In all places under Heaven and wherever Earth continues, it is all the King’s and all are his subjects. We are searching high and low for loyalist warriors. Whoever is loyal and will fight for righteousness must join with us immediately. Meritorious deeds will be rewarded.

Transmitted by command.

The tenth month

Lord of Kochihira, Tō Shōju

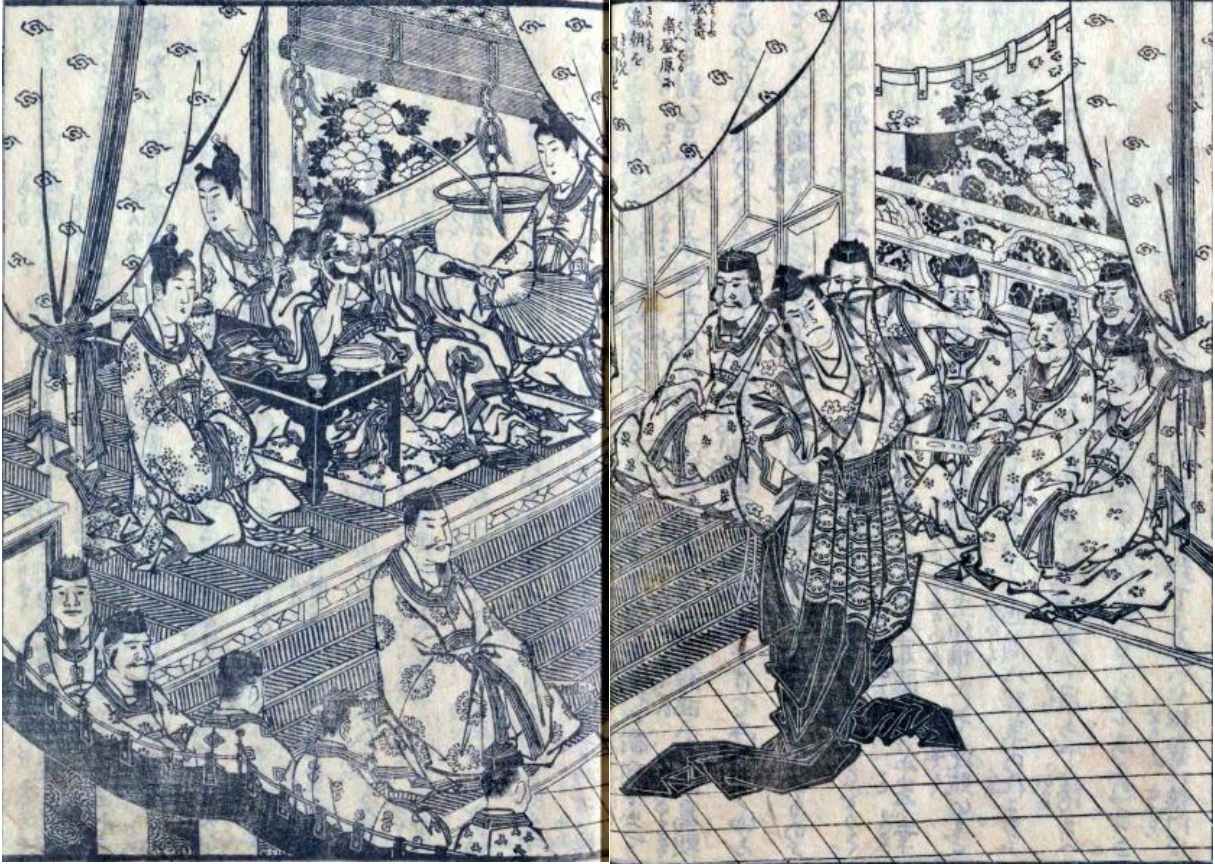
Tametomo nodded upon seeing this. The next morning he set out from the inn and headed for Haeburu. General Shōju, leading a force of thirty men, was patrolling the area around Haeburu Castle, their hoofbeats hastening toward a grove of pines in order to take a rest. Seeing the young master, he brought his horse to a halt and asked one of his men, “Who is that? Go and ask his name.” Immediately guessing that this must be Shōju, Tametomo came out from among the trees and briefly announced himself. “I am from Japan, a direct descendant of its fifty-sixth emperor, Seiwa, and my Name is Chinzei Hachirō Minamoto no Tametomo. I am also known as the young master of Kyushu. Though I claim superior martial skills, because of difficulties in my country I

¹ *Gogyaku*, see chapter 38, note 5.

unexpectedly ended up drifting to your land. If you have any use for me, I shall spare no efforts to be of service.” Shōju nimbly dismounted and, bowing deferentially, said, “Japan is a great country. We are delighted that you have come from such a distance to honor us with your presence. I am the Lord of Kochihira, Tō Shōju. Our country is in chaos, our sovereign is an infant, and the rebels have not yet been eliminated. Though I am a man of little talent, I resolved to tax my ingenuity and treat wise men with courtesy. If you go to Harbaru, the Grand Minister (Ri Yū) will surely value your service. Please come.” Then he went on ahead. Tametomo was impressed by Shōju’s uncommon power of observation as if he could see everything about a person, so he made no objections and followed after him. When they reached Haebaru, Shōju had Tametomo wait for a while outside the gate while he went inside and explained the matter to Ri Yū. “Giving him a close look, I saw that he has the physiognomy of a sage, with prominent brows, a powerful build, and tall of stature, a very picture of a beardless Guan Yu.² If you make good use of him, it would only be a matter of days until Mōun is defeated. I ask you to receive him courteously.” Shōju recommended him fervently, but Ri Yū gave him no ear and laughed derisively. “Forget about him! Whether he’s a scion of a Japanese emperor or a fierce military leader, he couldn’t manage to live in his own country and so, shamelessly clinging to his own life, drifted here. The limits of his wisdom and courage are obvious. Having once been taken in by Mōun, I’ve learned my lesson and want nothing to do with imposters of dubious background. Drive him away!” In spite of Ri Yū’s brusqueness, Shōju persisted. “I take a different view. As they say, it may be easy to enlist ten thousand soldiers, but it is difficult to find one commander. It is written that Han Xin of Huaiyin begged for his food from an old woman and was endured humiliation in the marketplace when forced to crawl between a hooligan legs, and even after he came into Xiang Yu’s service, his abilities were not recognized. But then he served Liu Bang, defeated the mighty kingdom of Chu, and helped establish the Han dynasty that lasted over four hundred years.³ It often happens in the world that if a hero does not find a way to apply his resolution, he will only wander about, and if a man of wisdom does not have an opportunity, his talent will be buried. If you cast this man aside, will Mōun not find use for him? That would be like giving wings to a tiger. You should give him your earnest consideration.” Swayed by the

² Guan Yu (160-220), military general of the Three Kingdoms period.

³ Han Xin (231-196 BCE) was a military general who contributed who made major contributions to the founding of the Han dynasty. Xiang Yu (232-202 BCE) was king of Western Chu. Liu Bang later became Emperor Han Gaozu (256-195 BCE; r. 206-202 BCE). These accounts are found the *Shiji*.



logic of Shōju's candid remonstrance, Ri Yū gave the matter some consideration, then said, "What you say cannot be easily dismissed. Call in this Tametomo, or whatever his name is." Pleased to hear that, Shōju withdrew and went outside, soon returning with Tametomo. Wearing no official cap, Ri Yū was seated casually on a brocade cushion attended by two beautiful women on either side, one of them massaging his stiff shoulder. He did not change his posture to receive his visitor. Resenting such an affront, Tametomo did not approach him. For his part, Ri Yū was angered that the visitor did not engage in the anticipated blandishments. After a few moments of silence, Ri Yū took a banana-leaf fan and beckoned to Tametomo to come forward. "Visitor from afar, come closer. What abilities do you claim that could destroy Mōun? If you have a strategy, I shall choose its better parts and make use of them." Smiling derisively at such arrogant manners, Tametomo replied boldly, "Have you not heard, Grand Minister? On the battleground, swift action carries the day, but strategy must be kept secret. If you take advantage of opportunities and adapt to changes, then you are sure to be victorious in battle and successful in attack."⁴ This all depends on the mind of the commander. I do not yet know the strengths and

⁴ A line from the "Gaozu benji" chapter of *Shiji*.

weaknesses of the enemy, nor am I familiar with the geography, so I shall not speak of those things for the time being. Though I am not a man of much ability, when it comes to bow and arrow I can take on any enemy. At age sixteen I united all of Kyushu under my control, and at age nineteen I exercised dominion over seven islands. My wisdom exceeds that of Lu Jia, and my courage is greater than that of Fan Kuai.⁵ For me, beating opposition and quelling disorder are like wind blowing on the grass, while pacifying the people and governing a country is easier than grinding water in a mill. Other than that, I have no particular abilities.” Ri Yū clapped his hands and laughed boisterously. “If you take such pride in your wisdom and courage, then why did you leave your homeland and come here attempting to preserve your life? I simply cannot believe you. If by some chance what you say is not a lie, then there are three things you need to accomplish within three days. The first thing: the land in my domain between Koroku and Toyo Castle is too broad to ward off an enemy incursion. I want you to go there and, without any assistance, block it with a rock of a thousand pulls.⁶ The second thing: lately a giant eagle in Bengatake Peak has been menacing villagers and even killing them. I want you to go into that mountain alone and shoot down that monstrous bird. The third thing: Mōun’s rebel soldiers have been drawing water from the stream of Kawara. I want you to go slay them and bring me their heads. After you have accomplished these three tasks, I shall make good use of your services. If you fail at any one of them, you’ll no longer be permitted within the castle.” He spoke as if he expected no success at these challenges. Cheerfully pressing his hands together, Tametomo replied, “I accept the tasks you have given me. They will be easily accomplished.” It pained Shōju to hear of such demands. Turning to Ri Yū and reproaching him, he said, “The young master is an extraordinary man in this world. Why try him with feats that require only common valor? As they say, ‘Three armies can be thrown into disorder by doubt.’⁷ I beg you not to harbor doubts, and immediately make use of his services.” Ri Yū shook his head. “If I do not test his fortitude now before employing him, the soldiers will despise me and will not follow orders. What do you see in him that makes you an advocate for him? As the saying goes, ‘If an able falcon does not leave the falconer’s fist, its ability remains unknown.’ You are being very rash.”

⁵ Lu Jia (240-170 BCE), a philosopher and politician of the Western Han, is credited with converting Liu Bang to Confucianism. Fan Kuai (242-189 BCE), a military general of the Western Han, was a key figure in Liu Bang’s victory over Chu.

⁶ *Chibiki no iwao*, in the *Kojiki*, the rock Izanagi used to block the entrance to the underworld.

⁷ The source of this saying is unclear.

Then Tametomo stood up and, straightening his *hakama*, said, “The words of a great man, once spoken, cannot be retracted. If I fail at those three tasks, everything I have said will have been a lie. I’ll be on my way, then, to the port called Koroku. Please tell me how to get there.” Ri Yū also rose and said, “I’ll take you there myself.” Leaving Shōju to guard the castle, Ri Yū changed his clothing, then mounted his horse and left with Tametomo and a retinue of forty or fifty soldiers. When they reached the port of Koroku, Tametomo looked about. Before him was an expanse of blue sea, while to his right was Mount Senbai and to his left was Mount Oki. A winding path led



between the two mountains that rose like giant screens overhead with a width of only little more than three yards. “Indeed, if this passage were blocked off, it would become an impregnable fortress,” Tametomo said to himself. Ri Yū dismounted, seated himself on a campstool, and urged him on, saying that he was taking too much time. Rolling up both sleeves, Tametomo strode to the shoreline and, finding boulders so enormous that he had to look up to see the top of them, with complete composure and no sign of strain on his face he alternately rolled them and carried them on his shoulder, lining them up in the middle of the passage. Soon the winding passage was completely blocked. It was a feat of strength that seemed superhuman. Ri Yū was utterly astounded, and the soldiers all shouted acclamations. But Ri Yū burned with envy, fearing that if he were to employ such a man, his own authority would be diminished. Betraying an air of displeasure he mounted his horse and led Tametomo back to Haeburu. Rushing out to meet them, Shōju asked about Tametomo. Having no choice but to give an honest reply, Ri Yū told him exactly what had happened. Full of admiration, Shōju deeply revered the young master as having exceeded all of his expectations.

However, being narrow-minded, Ri Yū hated being around anyone superior to himself, and was still of no mind to employ Tametomo. He preseed him, saying “Now go to Bengatake

and shoot down that eagle.” Shōju again objected, saying, “The young master’s martial courage has been amply demonstrated at Koroku. We should invite him to an inn and fete him. Come along.” He was about to get up, but Ri Yū was reluctant and, glancing about, commanded, “Brute strength may be found in common men. It is strategy that wins against an enemy. Prepare provisions for him for three days, and quickly leave the castle.” Knowing that further remonstrance would be impossible, Shōju sighed and said to Tametomo, “If you are to go to Bengatake, I shall take you there with some men. The path up that mountain is steep and winding with lots of thick overgrowth, and even seasoned climbers sometimes get lost on it. Moreover, there are poisonous serpents and wild beasts. You need to be careful” Tametomo replied, “I’m flattered by your kind consideration, but looking from here at the summit of Bengatake, it seems well exposed, and I shall need not guide. I’ll leave at once” Then going out into the hallway, he outfitted himself in light attire and, with some hunting arrows and bow in hand, took his leave of Ri Yū and Shōju and headed for the upper reaches of the Kawara stream. The sun was sinking and it was about the time of the first watch [8:00 p.m.]. Mōun’s troops were supposed to have come already to draw water. Tametomo spent the night patrolling the riverbank, but the whole story about the soldiers appeared to be a fabrication: not a single person appeared. He ended up wasting an entire night, and when day broke, he climbed Bengatake and spent the day hunting, but did not see a single bird resembling an eagle. The next day passed in the same manner, hunting from dawn until dark. Three days had passed. He could not very well return to Haebaru. And so, Tametomo had drifted here as a foreigner, had been compared to trash and thoroughly humiliated. And for whom? He had taken no eagle, he had killed not a single rebel soldier, and was thus unable to establish a name for valor in this country. Seething with vexation and irritation, he had spent three long, sleepless nights imagining an enemy behind every tree or rock, or waiting for an eagle to come.

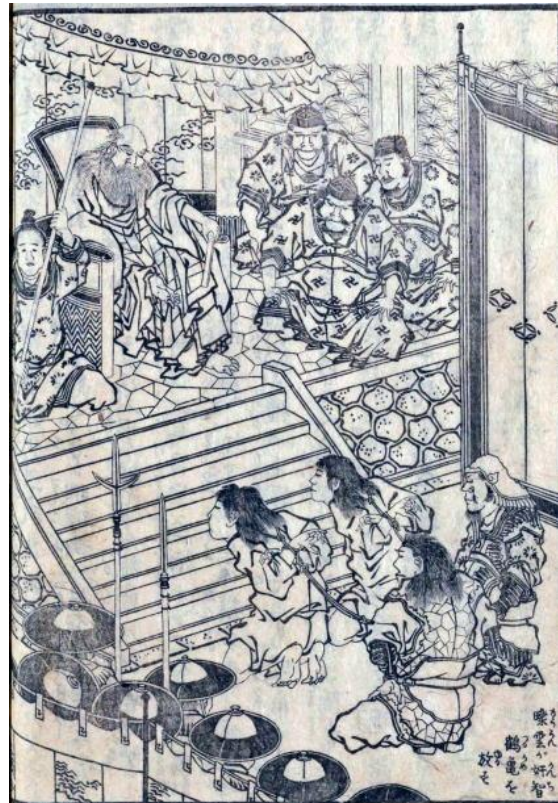
Chapter Forty-Eight

Making nefarious plans, Mōun pardons Tsuru and Kame,
The hapless fate of the filial son takes him to the bottom of a well.

The junior pages who, having received Mōun's command, went to Little Ryukyu with the beast of misfortune to slay Princess Nei, encountered Tametomo's arrows, more than half of them losing their lives. The survivors, unable to remain there and hoping to save some face by having captured Tsuru and Kame, sailed from the western *magiri*, barely making it to the port of Naha and finally arriving at the Dragon Palace. There they had the boys kneel in the courtyard while they reported all that had transpired. Hearing of their arrival, Mōun calmly entered, a kerchief with a comet design on his head, wearing a priestly robe of brocade with scarlet lining, a staff of coral tree wood in his hand, and shaded by an enormous fan held by a senior page. Having the report rehearsed for him personally, first of all he had the boys imprisoned and then quickly convened a meeting of the Council of Three. He explained to them that the beast of misfortune had been crushed under the Akase monument and had sunk into the soil, that through the aid of some unforeseen soldier over half of the junior pages were killed and in the end were unable to take the Princess, having only managed to take Mō Kokutei's children, Tsuru and Kame, captive. These three grand ministers, having previously submitted to Mōun, were fools who clung to life and feared death, and who cared nothing for loyalty and righteousness. Exchanging surprised glances, they said, "The people submitted out of fear of the beast of misfortune. It is thus no small catastrophe that we have lost the beast and that the Princess has been aided to escape. Please send another punitive expedition. The three of us should work together to send a force over land and sea." Pounding his armrest Mōun rejected their proposal. "Even if the Princess has gotten away this time, she is only a woman and gives us no cause to fear. The beast of misfortune was a product of my sorcery, so it was corporeal and at the same time incorporeal. Even if it sank into the earth, I can recall its essence and instill it within an eagle on Bengatake Peak, or within the daughter of a woodcutter on the foothill of that mountain, and then I can easily destroy Ri Yū. But the major obstacle is the stalwart man who came to the aid of the Princess. His martial valor is unmatched by anyone in history. Though I try to see him with my all-seeing eye, yet he escapes my vision. If Ri Yū employs him, it would be disastrous for us, but he is too sinister in his disposition and dislikes anyone who outshines him, so he is

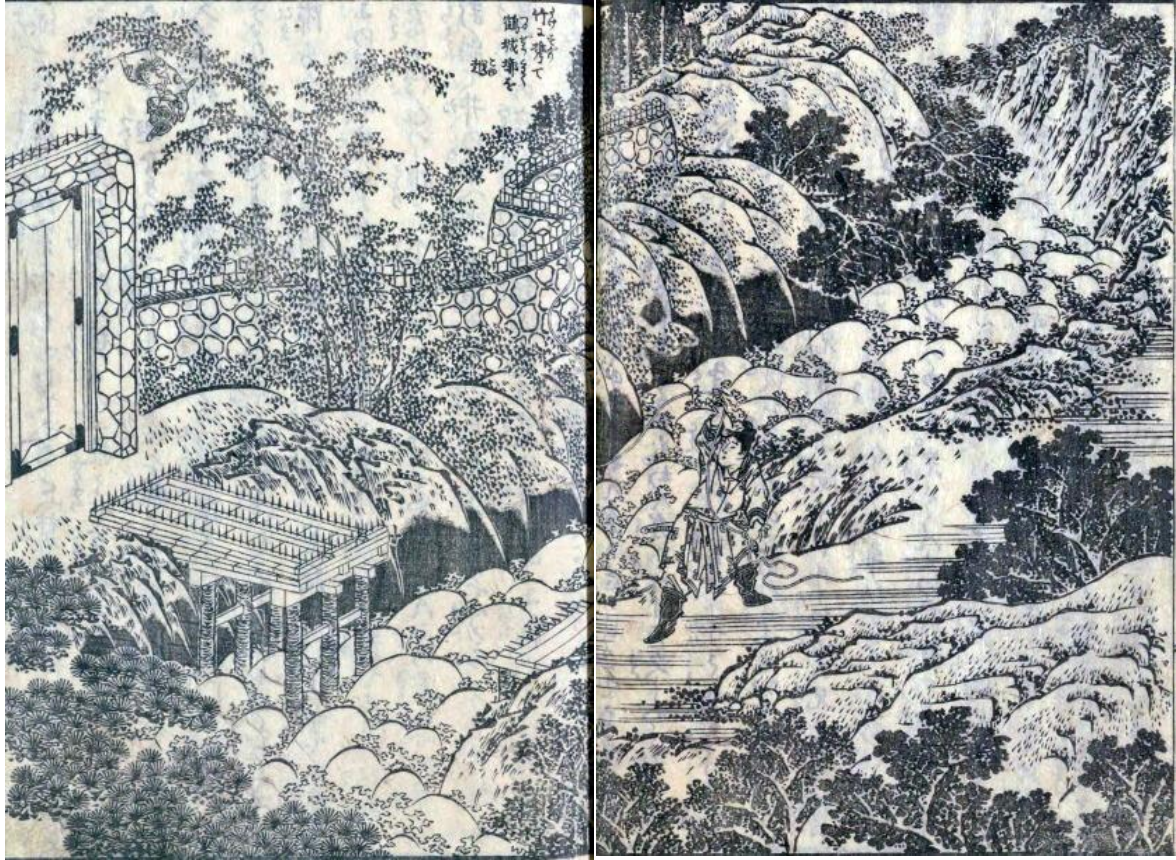
unlikely to employ such a heroic man. But even if he does, I have another plan in mind. Immediately close off the pontoon bridge over the Fuzō River and set up checkpoints at Ginowa, Urazoi, and Kitadani.” Members of the Council of Three were impressed with the farsightedness and resourcefulness of the command and made haste to relay it to the relevant lords.

The following day, Mōun had Tsuru and Kame retrieved from prison and unbound, then warned them, saying, “You are orphans of a loyal minister, and therefore I could not be so heartless as to decapitate you. Now while I am provisionally called Holy Sovereign, those who do not realize that that is to protect the Dragon Palace seem to think that I just took it by force. But if I were to leave the palace now and return to the mountain, it would simply be taken over by Ri Yū. The purpose of my remaining here is also to receive Princess Nei and to have her reign. I sent soldiers because you misunderstood and thought ill of me, rejecting me. That is why you were subjected to the humiliation of being bound. The Princess was received yesterday and will be installed in the women’s quarters. If you two aspire to loyal devotion, you will secretly go to Haebaru, slay Ri Yū, Shōju, and Kumagimi, then return here with the Prince. That Prince is not the son of the former King, but only some child that the *chūfugimi* and Ri Yū found to deceive everyone. Their claim is widely doubted, and you too have probably been suspicious. It is very regrettable that your father was slain by Ri Yū, and it was Kumagimi who took your mother’s life. Kumagimi keeps the dagger she stole that day in her breast pocket. That can serve as proof that what I’ve told you is true. If you decide to go, I’ll have soldiers lying in wait on the other side of Bengatake to give you support. Should anything unfavorable occur, immediately set the castle on fire as a signal. You could thereby fulfill both filial devotion and loyalty by this one act. You must not be geligent.” Though Tsuru and Kame were intelligent by nature, they were very young and easily swayed by Mōun’s clever words, which they half believed, half doubted. They looked at each other and for a while were unable to answer. But



when it occurred to them that Kumagimi was their mother's enemy, the matter was settled for them. And that meant that both Kumagimi and Ri Yū were sworn enemies. If the Princess was already here, then the best course would be to follow the Reverend Master's plan. Though they had not discussed it between themselves, tears of anger streamed down their faces as they boldly answered, "We accept your command. If the Princess can be installed safely in the women's quarters, we would bear no grudge even if we lost our heads. But we are forever indebted to you that you have spared our lives and are giving us a chance to take down our enemies. It is our heart's desire to return with the heads of Ri Yū and Kumagimi, and will also bring the Prince." Mōun was very pleased, and entertained them lavishly, giving them two famous swords, then saying, "I can let you have a distant look at the Princess." Rising and opening a brocade curtain, they could see her playing a *koto* in an upstairs room on the other side of the garden. It did not occur to the boys that Mōun had merely conjured the sight by means of sorcery. After making proper obeisance, they set out for Haebaru. Mōun sent five or six hundred soldiers to lie low between Bengatake and Kawara, commanding them that if they saw Haebaru Castle in flames, they were to take a shortcut from the south of Ōzato and attack immediately.

Since Tsuru and Kame did not know the lay of the castle, they mixed with a group of hunters and collected eagle feathers, then went to the castle hoping to find customers. The soldiers there were busy making arrows, and since the boys did not haggle over price, the soldiers were happy to acquire the feathers inexpensively. Moreover, given the boys' youth, the soldiers trusted them and let them inside. There, Tsuru and Kame took note of the dimensions of the castle and the fortifications of its four gates. That night, under cover of a moonless sky, they surreptitiously approached the moat by the rear gate. Tsuru whispered to his brother, "Now that we've come this far, it wouldn't be the best strategy for both of us to sneak inside. I'll go in first, and if the night patrol soldiers aren't paying attention, I'll whistle a signal to you. Wait here for the signal." But Kame would not hear of it. "I can't bear to hear you say that! To avenge our parents' deaths we've come this far tonight, enduring every kind of tribulation and now have our chance. I never expected to be told to wait. Even if we don't succeed in our mission and are killed by the enemy, it would be better for us to die together. Since you're older, I've accepted all of your commands as father instructed, but this time I won't!" In spite of himself, tears welled up in Tsuru's eyes at hearing such intrepidity from his brother, and answered in a low voice, "I share your feelings, but ultimately that's not a good plan. If I end up losing my life but you



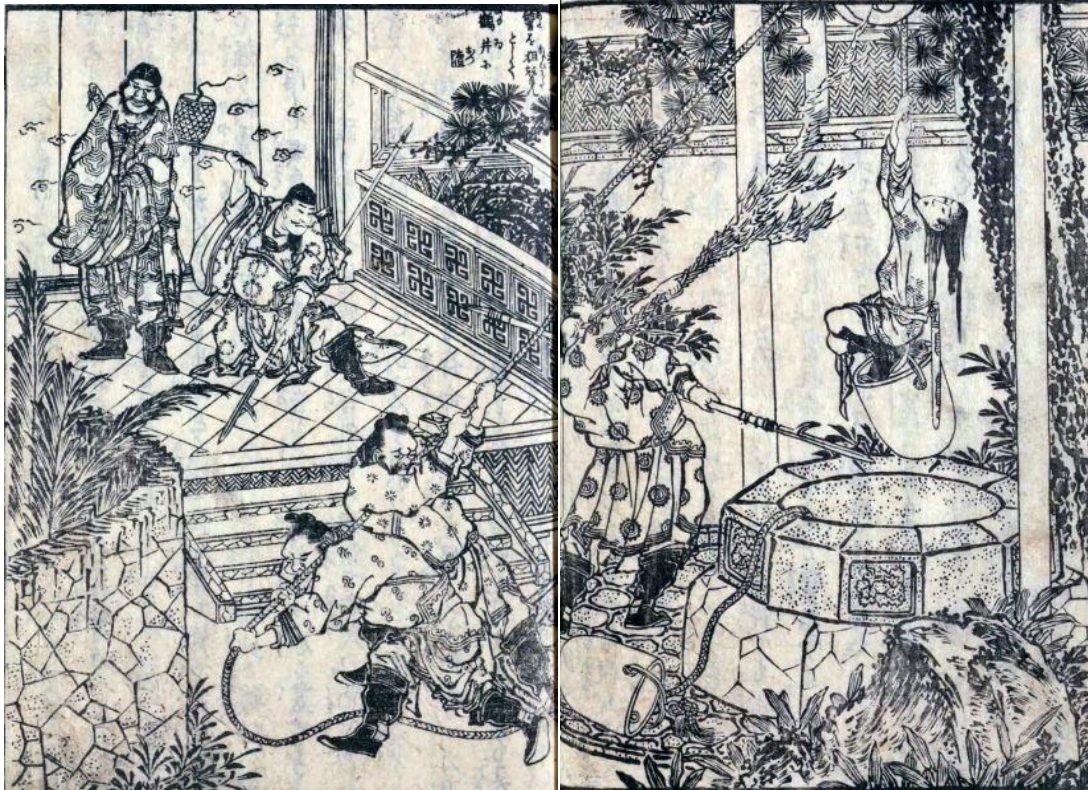
remain, then a day will come when you can achieve our objective, but if we die together, then who would avenge our parent's deaths? And who would console their spirits? It grieves me that you refuse to comply." But Kame was unmoved. "In that case, you stay here. I'll sneak inside and take a look." Without waiting for a response, Kame started toward a place where the moat narrowed, but Tsuru grabbed him and reproached him. "Hey, wait! I have something to say. Your resolve is splendid, but I'm the older one and was the recipient of our parents' favor longer than you. Thus it would be out of order for an older brother shamelessly to be left behind while a younger brother goes ahead. Especially in a night raid on a castle, priorities must be maintained to avoid failure. Is it right for brothers to argue when they've come to an enemy castle? If you won't listen to me, then we're no longer brothers. How unreasonable!" Kame could put up no more resistance and only wept silently. Then Tsuru added in a hushed voice, "If going ahead is for the sake of our parents, then staying behind is also an act of filial piety. Even if I am killed or taken prisoner, you must not give in to a burst of rage and rush in to throw your life away. Instead, go into hiding, conceal your identity, bear the unbearable, and wait for an opportune time to seek vengeance. That is what would fulfill both filiality and righteousness." Then in firm

resolve the filial son crept up to a grove of tall bamboo next to the wall and, throwing a hook over it, had his brother hold the end of the rope while he climbed up over the wall. Fortunately the night patrol had ended, and he was easily able to pass through two or three inner gates. Wondering where to go, he looked about, but had no time to give it thought. Then he recalled having seen the chimney of the castle kitchen. He stealthily climbed up on the roof and from there stole inside. Remembering that there was a well below, he thought to lower himself into it using the rope. But it was old and rotted, and snapped in two. He fell with a loud splash, bringing the alarmed cooks running. "Something fell into the well. What could it be?" They clamored to bring lights and saw that the rope had broken and the bucket had fallen, creating quite a stir among them. "This is no ordinary happening. It's either a thief or an enemy spy. Let's use a halberd and try stabbing him." Tsuru was for a time under the water, but when he floated to the surface, he grabbed the side of the well for support. When he thought that being stabbed there would be a useless way to die, he cried out without hesitation, "I've fallen in here. Please pull me out." Surprised anew to hear this, the cooks cried, "This must be a thief, then. Stab him to death!" Tsuru was in a most perilous position, looking up at them like the proverbial frog in the well, but who knew that he was actually a filial son and not a thief? If he did not maintain the few inches above his throat out of the water, all would be over. In whose house would his traveling spirit find repose that evening?

Chapter Forty-Nine

Expounding three strategies Shōju saves Tsuru,
On Eagle Nest Mountain, Ri and Chō lose their heads.

Upon hearing Tsuru's voice calling from within the well, the cooks were convinced that he must be a thief, and when a few hot-blooded young men were about to stab him with their halberds, some senior soldiers hurriedly stopped them, saying, "If you kill him without first pulling him out, you'll pollute the water we serve to our lords, and that would be to our discredit. Whether you take him captive or kill him, first hear what he has to say." In compliance, the young men stood around the well with weapons in hand while a senior soldier went to inform Ri Yū. Ri Yū was already in bed at the time, but he sprang up with a start at hearing the news. "It's no ordinary thief. It must be one of Mōun's spies. Go tell Shōju immediately, and secure all four gates. I'll go there myself and check on the situation." Then taking the sword by his pillow and fastening it on his sash, he had a senior page bring a light and they headed for the kitchen. Asking the senior soldier to rehearse the details, he cocked his head and thought for a while, then commanded, "Mōun is very adept at sorcery. If this is one of his spies, he could run like the wind or vanish like smoke. Even if it pollutes the water, that would be better than letting an enemy



escape. Just stab him to death!” The young soldiers who had at first wanted to do so replied “Yes, sir!” Then as they repositioned their halberds and were about to make their thrusts, Shōju rushed forth and, ordering the young men to stand back, turned to Ri Yū and said, “A senior soldier just now informed me of this evening’s strange happening, and I have a general idea of what is going on. Why not take such a suspicious person captive? Hurry and pull him out.” But shaking his head, Ri Yū stopped them, saying with a smug and knowing look on his face, “That’s very imprudent of you, general. Mōun uses sorcery, and if it’s his spy, he could hide himself with invisibility, couldn’t he? Then it would be impossible to keep him captive. It would be easier just to kill him. Isn’t that so?” With a serious countenance, Shōju objected unreservedly, “The ancients said, ‘When throwing something at a rat, spare the pottery.’¹ If you kill him without first pulling him out, that would be like throwing a pot at a rat: you’d spoil the well, and the loss would be yours. This castle has always had a shortage of water. Why use an ox cleaver to flay a chicken?² Even if he is one of Mōun’s men, not all of them have his powers. Generally speaking, there are four types of techniques of invisibility: one using water [*suiton*], one using fire [*katon*], one using wood [*mokuton*], and one using soil [*doton*].³ This guy fell into a well and can’t get out. he’s putting up no resistance and is waiting to be bound because he has no such technique of escape. Have you thought of that?” Though still suspicious, Ri Yū ordered, “In that case, pull him up.” The men lowered a bucket on a rope, then yelled down into the well, “We’ll pull you up now, so hold on to the rope.” Then hand over hand they pulled him out of the well and immediately tied him up. Then when they brought the light closer and looked at him, contrary to their expectations he did not look like a typical spy, but was a handsome youth of fourteen or fifteen. Everyone was amazed and left speechless.

Then glaring at Tsuru, Ri Yū ordered, “This scoundrel has used sorcery to transform himself into a handsome youth and deceive us, then look for a chance to escape. One way to expose such sorcerous transformation is to pour something filthy over him. Men, take him out and dump excrement from the latrine on him!” Then kneeling before Ri Yū, Tsuru plausibly prevaricated, saying, “I bore no evil intention at all. I am the son of hunters on Mount Ōzato, and my name is Jirōgane. I’ve been coming to the castle daily to sell eagle feathers, and yesterday I

¹ See chapter 33, note 18.

² This phrase appears in the “Yang Huo” chapter of *The Analects*.

³ These four techniques are typically associated with *ninja* training rather than with sorcery.

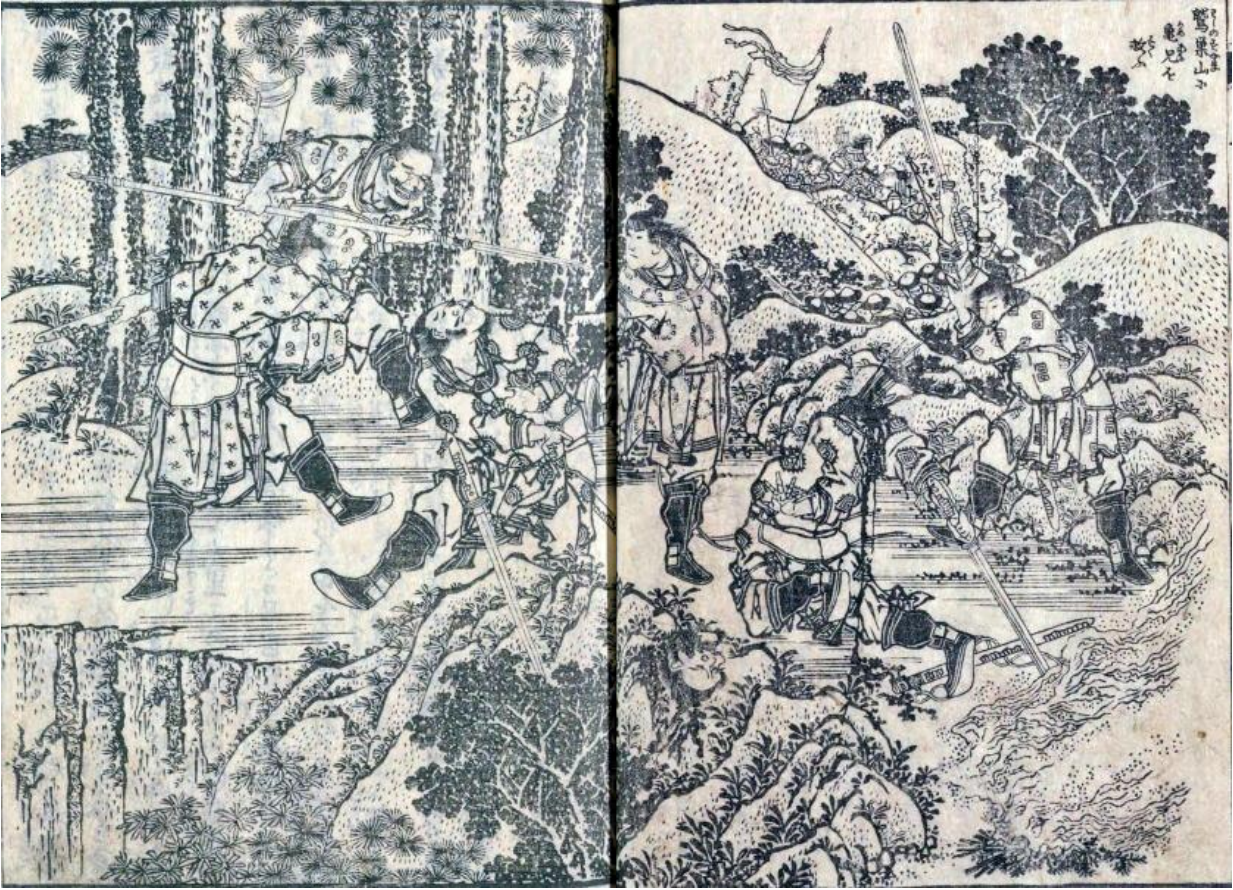
was allowed inside. Thinking that there must be all kinds of delicacies in the kitchen, and wanting to sample a bit of them in my lifetime, temptation got the better of me, and while I was looking about it grew dark and the castle gates were locked. I had no way to get out. So I thought I would just spend the night under a lattice or something, and as I was looking about for things I had seen when it was light, I clumsily fell into the well. Please spare my life.” Looking about, Ri Yū asked, “Does anyone recognize him?” One senior soldier came forward and, examining him carefully, said, “Yes, he came here yesterday to sell eagle feathers.” After some thought, Ri Yū said, “No, neither his visage nor his manner of speaking is that of a hunter’s son. Look, he’s wearing a breast protector under his clothing. Now that I listen to him talk, his voice sounds like that of Mō Kokutei. Not only that, but his face bears a strong resemblance. He is without doubt Kokutei’s son Tsuru. He has come to avenge his father’s death, and is targeting me. Quickly take him out and behead him!” Seeing Ri Yū’s raging, Tsuru realized that there was no way to escape, and with tears of anger in his eyes he stood up, clenched his fists, and tried to rush at Ri Yū. But his bonds held him back and he again fell to his knees and shouted abusively, saying, “Now that you know, there’s no need to announce myself. What crime against the country did my loyal father commit? It was to clear my late father’s name of the false accusation of all your slander that I have gone to such measures, but now I haven’t been able to achieve anything and stand here in bonds. I won’t beg for even another day of life. I have not succeeded in taking your head or that of Kumagimi to fulfill my filial responsibilities. If you’re going to kill me, then just do it! If I have to go through nine lives, my spirit won’t let you have any peace!” Ri Yū laughed derisively. “Now that you’re just a fish in the kettle, you talk big, don’t you? You’re like the bird Jingwei trying to fill up the ocean.⁴ You’re foolish to think you can accomplish after death what you weren’t able to do in life. I executed Mō Kokutei under orders because of his crimes. Kumagimi had nothing to do with it.” Tsuru was quick to raise his voice, “You’re just saying whatever comes to mind. Even if you can fool people, how could you fool Heaven? I’ve heard from Reverend Master Mōun himself about your nefarious plans. Will you still argue, then?” Dumbfounded to hear that, Ri Yū drew his sword and rushed toward Tsuru, but Shōju stepped forward and stopped him. “Your excellency, if you give in to momentary anger and slay this youth, you will only end up invigorating the enemy. How is it that you don’t understand? I’ve

⁴ In Chinese mythology, as recorded in the *Shanhaijing*, a bird called Jingwei carried twigs and pebbles to drop into the Eastern Sea to fill it up because its mother had drowned in it.

been sending spies to the palace and have discovered that Mōun was fully aware that Mō Kokutei's sons, Tsuru and Kame, were attending to Princess Nei and helped her to escape to Shimakita in Little Ryukyu, where they hid by the stone monument of Akase, and he sent a large number of junior pages along with the beast of misfortune. As they were about to destroy the three refugees, by the power of the spirit of the Tenson ancestors the beast sank into the earth and the Princess was saved with some mysterious help and her whereabouts is unknown. The remaining rebel soldiers barely made it back to the palace with Tsuru and Kame as captives. Mōun took pity on the boys and secretly let them in on his plans to destroy your excellency. But you were lucky to take Tsuru captive this evening. What I surmise about Mōun's plan is that if Tsuru succeeded in killing you, he was immediately to set fire as a signal, whereupon a large number of soldiers lying in wait in the mountains around Ōzato and Naga River would descend on this castle. And Mōun also assumed that if Tsuru were not successful, then your excellency would slay him out of anger. Then it could be said that your excellency killed a filial son out of personal spite. Mō Kokutei came from a distinguished family, and had earned the respect of the people. If without eliminating Mōun you execute the son of a distinguished family, you will dampen the hopes of the people, and when the hopes of the people are extinguished, military authority becomes weak. And if military authority is weak, this castle cannot be maintained for long. Please, reconsider and restrain your contempt." When Shōju concluded his eloquent and flowing remonstrance and appeal to reason, Ri Yū was confounded and, putting his sword back into its sheath, asked, "You are quite right. Do you have some strategy in mind, then?" Smiling, Shōju replied, it is simple to carry out a strategy in response to the enemy's strategy, but your excellency will not likely carry it out." Ri Yū's countenance darkened, and he pressed Shōju, saying, "Why do you disregard me so? Whether or not I carry out a strategy depends on the circumstances of the moment. Come on, out with it!" Looking about, Shōju said, "Everyone assembled here is trustworthy, but it is best to keep strategy a secret. Please have them withdraw." Nodding in assent, Ri Yū signaled with his eyes and all of the cooks and senior pages left the room, taking Tsuru with them. Then drawing closer and lowering his voice, Shōju said, "If your excellency wishes to destroy Mōun, then repay enmity with virtue by pardoning Tsuru, appointing him as Lord of the Middle Castle, and restoring his family's position. Then all of those who submitted to Mōun out of fear of the beast of misfortune will regret their error, long for virtue, and return to you. When rectitude is placed against the crookedness of the masses, they

will invariably choose rectitude. This is a plan to win without a battle, and it is not difficult to carry out. It would be to the great fortune of all if you were to implement this plan.” Hearing this, Ri Yū frowned. “Tsuru is the son of the treacherous retainer Mō Kokutei. It would be an improper application of rewards and punishments to entrust him with an important position and make him lord. I simply cannot adopt such a plan. Do you have another one?” Shōju replied, “I already have three plans in mind. What I have just told you is the primary one. There is also a secondary one and a tertiary one. Those are, on the other hand, difficult to carry out. But they are better than nothing.” Ri Yū bent forward and again asked, “Then what do the secondary and tertiary ones consist of? Tell me.” Shōju drew even closer and said, “Mōun has sent soldiers waiting for Tsuru to set the castle on fire. Before daybreak, if you have some junior pages take Tsuru to Eagle Nest Mountain beyond Ōzato and stage a fake decapitation there, then Mōun’s soldiers will think that their plan has gone awry and will withdraw. Then if I lead four or five hundred valiant soldiers to block them off at Naga River and attack, we’ll be able to decimate them. After that you could bring Tsuru back to the castle and put him in my charge. That is the secondary plan. There is still a tertiary one, which is to pardon Tsuru without either reward or punishment to go back to Mōun, who will be unable to make sense of it, but will not be so reckless as to attack Haebaru. Your excellency, please choose one of these two while it is still dark. Once day breaks, neither of them will be of effect.” After listening carefully, Ri Yū said, “Though the tertiary plan would be easy to carry out, it seems insufficient as a plan simply to let Tsuru go. I choose the secondary plan.” Then summoning his trusted junior pages Chō Hyō and Ri Ko, he whispered the secret plan to them. Having understood the command, they took Tsuru along with fifty or sixty soldiers and headed for Eagle Nest Mountain. Shōju left the castle at the head of a large number of troops heading north of Azahira, racing toward Naga River.

In the meantime, having been reproved by his brother, Kame unwillingly remained behind waiting by the moat. Under the starlit sky, dawn was approaching but there was still no signal. Thinking that something had gone wrong, Kame was about to steal inside when suddenly the gate opened and out streamed fifty or sixty soldiers heading north, all bearing weapons and torches and surrounding Tsuru, who was bound. Kame was shocked at the sight and was about to draw his sword, rush into their midst and die together with his brother. But then he thought that he could do no more than mount a pathetic offensive against so many, and the words his brother had whispered into his ear came back to him, that it would be unfilial for both of them to die at



the same time, so he convinced himself to put off an attack. As he was hesitating, a large force of four or five hundred soldiers left the castle. It was all the more obvious, then, that he would be helpless against such numbers. He took out a small torch and lit it with embers fallen from enemy flares and, following after the first group of soldiers, intended to see what would become of his brother. He ran alongside them, but in the pitch darkness they took no notice of him. Since they had set out ahead of Shōju and were moving quickly, they soon crossed the Kawara Bridge and arrived at Eagle Nest Mountain on this side of Bengatake. It was a long winter night, and had not yet dawned. To the north lay Bengatake with its dense growth of forest, while to the south a tall peak stood like a screen. Though Ri Yū had adopted Shōju's plan, he was not particularly interested in crushing the enemy troops but rather thought only that getting rid of Tsuru would be the best way to avoid later trouble. So he whispered his command to Chō Hyō and Ri Ko, and they agreed to it. "Shōju said a lot of things to spare you, but his plan is too circuitous. You have already become assassins in Mōun's employ and stole into our castle, and so his excellency will never pardon you. Thus I am going to take your head. If you value your life, tell us the

whereabouts of Princess Nei and your brother Kame. If you can tell us, do so!” In response, Tsuru looked back and, fixing his eyes on Chō Hyō and Ri Ko, said derisively, “Ever since the day I resolved to avenge my parents’ deaths, things have not gone as planned. I am prepared for whatever happens, so why should I now value this transitory life? If you’re going to cut me down, then hurry and do it! I’ll have my vengeance when Ri Yū’s and your luck runs out, and you’re taken captive by the enemy and decapitated!” The two men were infuriated by his words and shouted, “You’re pretty bold for someone your age, aren’t you? Now say goodbye to this world!” Then rolling up his sleeves and standing behind Tsuru, Chō Hyō drew his sword. First brushing the hair off Tsuru’s neck, he raised the blade high over the boy. Just then, unable to bear watching more, Kame dashed out from the shadow of the trees and with a flash of his sword struck Chō Hyō, sending his head flying over his brother and falling far away. Seeing this, Ri Ko drew his sword and was about to cut Kame down when Tsuru rose on his feet and kicked him hard in the side, causing him to fall on his back with a groan. Kame then cut his brother’s bonds. The soldiers attacked from all sides with halberds and swords in hand. Kame fought with all his might, while Tsuru grabbed Ri Ko’s sword as he was struggling to get up and stabbed him from his back through his chest. As he drew the dripping blade out, he slipped on the fresh blood and, losing his footing, tumbled down to the bottom of a ravine. Kame had no idea whether or not his brother survived the fall, but had no time to save him. Slashing left and right he managed to wound three and cut down two, but he was greatly outnumbered. Just when the situation seemed hopeless, a great cry echoed as four or five hundred mounted warriors came thundering out from among the trees. They came bursting forth with such force that the Haeburu soldiers could not possibly have taken them on. In a state of confusion, stumbling over tree stumps or being slashed by their own swords, over twenty of them perished and there was not a single one of the survivors who was not wounded. They fled left and right, while the leader of the enemy forces shouted “Come back and fight, cowards!” This leader was none other than the Intelligence Officer Zen Kō, whose forces had been sent according to Mōun’s plan to lie in wait near Mount Ōzato to attack Haeburu Castle upon receiving the signal from Tsuru and Kame. That day, Mōun had ascended into his upper room and had become aware that Tsuru and Kame were being harshly treated by the enemy and so he sent a courier to Mount Ōzato to deliver a new plan to Zen Kō, ordering “At dawn you are to head to Eagle Nest Mountain to smite Ri Yū’s troops and also to slay Tsuru and Kame. If some escape, don’t take time to pursue them. If you see enemy

reinforcements, retreat quickly to the foot of Bengatake and then return after ransacking the houses of mountaineers there.” As commanded, Zen Kō swept in from Mount Ōzato, dividing his troops in two with one flank pursuing the fleeing enemy and the other trying to take down Kame, who had escaped peril only to face an even greater danger. He was briefly able to deflect arrows with his sword, but escape seemed impossible, and he decided that if he was to die, he wanted to become part of the same mountain soil as his brother. Flinging himself down the ravine, he tumbled headlong to the bottom, but must have been protected by Kinmanmon, because he sustained no injury at all. Thinking then that his brother must also have survived the fall he called out for him, but the only answer was wind through the pines. He searched but found nothing. Had he already run away, then? There were fierce wild animals about, so what might have become of him? Even if his brother had died, he at least wanted to find his remains. Though the long night had ended, it was still dark in the ravine. He wandered back and forth, living on hopelessly. Scooping up water from a spring, in the reflection on his dampened sleeve he could see that the stars had faded and the call of a copper pheasant announced the break of day. It was also a reminder of the transitoriness of life, and it weighed on his heart like the clouds sitting atop the peaks. There seemed to be no end either to his tears or to his confusion.

Chapter Fifty

Leaving the tree, the lone ape's life is preserved,
Obtaining an eagle, the wandering traveler opens a chest.

After Chō Hyō and Ri Ko had left, Shōju set out leading a large number of soldiers toward the upper reaches of Naga River. First he sent scouts to reconnoiter enemy encampments on Mount Ōzato. They came running back with the report that they did not see a single enemy soldier around that mountain. Shōju found it strange that Mōun would not use his cunning to have soldiers lying in wait there. “Be that as it may, his excellency did not adopt my best plan. And his having Chō Hyō and Ri Ko take Tsuru up Eagle Nest Mountain was not to threaten the enemy but likely only to kill Tsuru. If I don’t hurry to save him, his life will be over.” Nodding to himself, he quickly divided his troops, leaving three hundred to guard the Naga River while he personally led two hundred racing toward Eagle Nest Mountain, soon arriving at its foothills. There he unexpectedly encountered the remnant of Chō Hyō’s and Ri Ko’s men who had fled from Zen Kō’s attack. The rays of dawn were beginning to lighten the peaks, and the banners fluttering in the mountain breeze convinced the fleeing soldiers that Shōju’s troops were friends. Like pheasants hiding in the grass from hunters, they rushed forward, shouting “General, save us, save us!” Intelligence Officer Zen Kō, at the head of his soldiers, spurred his mount and came in pursuit. Seeing that, Shōju thought, “So, Mōun’s foresight was just as I thought.” Then Zen Kō’s forces turned and headed for Bengatake. Sensing some trap, Shōju did not pursue them. As they were taking a rest, the soldiers who had fled told him about how Chō Hyō and Ri Ko were slain, about how Tsuru had fallen down a ravine, his fate unknown, and how Kame had been shot. Shōju deeply regretted that he had been too late to save the boys. Returning to the Naga River he led the combined forces back to Haebaru Castle, where he reported everything to Ri Yū. Ri Yū was disappointed to hear of the deaths of Chō Hyō and Ri Ko, in whom he had placed such trust, but he felt reassured that Tsuru would not have survived the fall down that rocky ravine. And how could Kame have escaped, having been shot by Mōun’s men? He was secretly pleased, thinking that he had nothing to worry about with those two out of the way. But he asked Shōju, “Even though Mōun recruited Tsuru and Kame to assassinate me, why would he have Kame shot? I can’t make sense of that.” Smiling, Shōju replied, “They are peerless examples of filial loyalty, but they do not yet understand Mōun’s wickedness. So they accepted his plan and came

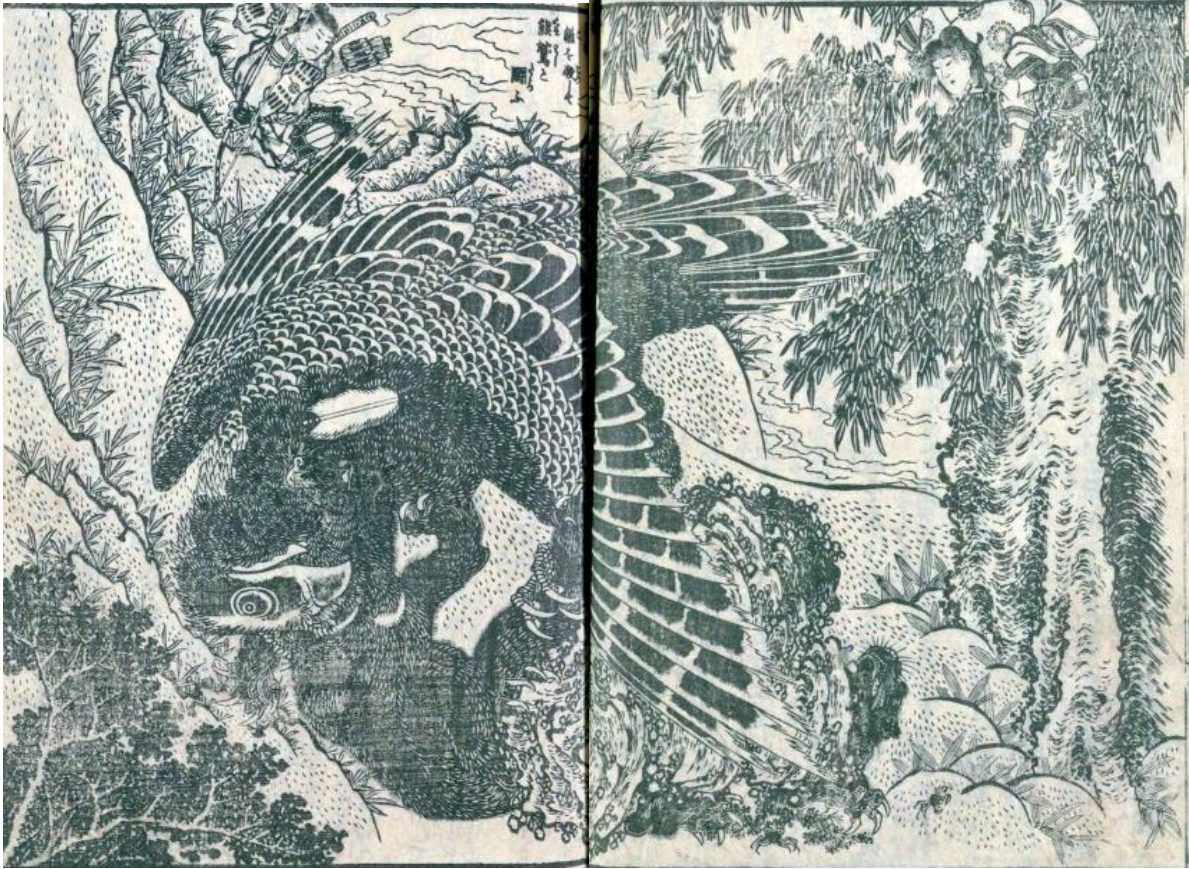
here last night intending to kill you. But when their plan went awry, Mōun feared that his scheme might be exposed, and thus had Kame shot. Don't you think so?" Ri Yū was astounded, and greatly fearing the sorcerer, said, "Tametomo promised to accomplish the tasks within three days, and it's suspicious that he has not returned from Bengatake. He's probably also a spy for Mōun. Even if he were to come back now, more than three days have passed, so I wouldn't let him in the castle. Please be aware of that." Knitting his brows, Shōju replied, "No, Tametomo is descended from the Japanese imperial line, and is an unmatched military leader. He would definitely not follow Mōun. If your excellency would set aside your suspicions and make good use of his services, within a matter of days the Prince could be returned to the palace." At that, Ri Yū's countenance instantly darkened and he raged, "Commander, why have you turned me into your enemy? Chō Hyō and Ri Ko lost their lives because of your attempt to spare Tsuru and Kame, and now you side with this Tametomo whose background is uncertain, praising his military prowess to the skies. I am the sole inheritor of ruling authority from the former King, and quelling disturbances in this land is up to me. The Prince lives or dies at my discretion, and I cannot allow your unbridled words. Take note of this if you want to keep your head!" Bowing respectfully, Shōju withdrew without saying more.

But to return to another part of our story, when Tsuru was unexpectedly saved from Chō Hyō's blade by his brother Kame on Eagle Nest Mountain, and then after cutting down Ri Ko, slipping on his blood and falling into a ravine several hundred feet deep, who would have known that an enormous chestnut tree was at its base, spreading its limbs and leaves like a shelf, rather like a carpet spreading out. Tsuru was caught in the branches of this tree, so fortunately his fall was not fatal, but he sustained a hard blow to his side and was knocked unconscious for some time. Kame did not imagine that his brother was up in a tree, and though he went about calling for him, there was no answer, so the two did not meet. As day broke and the wind sweeping down from the mountain brushed the treetops, the dew it carried moistened Tsuru's throat and he quickly revived. He raised his head and looked about. He was not a mountain monkey, so what was he doing in the treetops? That tree was over twelve yards tall, and with no branches below there was no footing to make a descent. He thought about how he might climb down, but no idea came to mind. He was tormented by the thought that his life might end there, and by the uncertainty of what had become of his brother. Without even wings to fly away, he was like a

butterfly caught in a spider's web. He knew that, like the dream of a butterfly¹ this world is but a dream, yet his hunger and fatigue seemed quite real to him. Looking down he saw a woodcutter's trail and a ray of hope shone in his mind, thinking that if someone came along he could call for help. It was near the end of the tenth month, but being a southern country it was still warm and the leaves had not withered. There were ripe chestnuts that had not yet fallen, and he was able to stave off hunger with those and regain some vigor. Then from behind a crag an enormous bear emerged with its cub, foraging along a clear streamlet until it came beneath the tree. As Tsuru watched to see what it would do, it tipped over a large rock and had its cub gather the river crabs underneath. As Tsuru watched, it impressed him how all living things care for their young. And yet he had not succeeded in avenging his parents' deaths, and had no way to repay his debt of gratitude to them. As he wiped away the tears elicited by such thoughts, the chestnuts fell out of his hand, hitting the bear. Startled by that, the bear lost its hold of the great stone, which fell on the poor cub, crushing it. It died with blood gurgling from its mouth. The mother bear frantically moved the stone away, but her cub was a flattened as a board. The bear let out a howl of sorrow. In its wretched state, the animal could not realize that it had caused the death. Nor did it realize that a person was up in the tree. It only looked about fiercely to find what had killed its child. Just then there was a great flapping of wings as an eagle lit on the great stone. It was twice the size of the bear, at least ten feet from beak to tail. A hunter's arrow had pierced its left wing and it was no longer able to fly. The bear glared at it and, perhaps thinking that it was the one that had harmed her cub, suddenly pounced on it, sinking its claws into the bird's breast in an attempt to tear it open. The eagle wrapped its talons around the bear's front legs and pecked with its steel-like beak. Round and round they went, each smeared with blood and neither loosening its hold. Finally both expired, the eagle with its feathers ripped off and the bear with its throat torn open. Watching from a distance, it seemed to Tsuru that the bear did not understand the cause of its cub's death, and its reaction was simply in its nature, seeing an enemy and not retreating no matter what. That is what made it chief among wild beasts. If the eagle had not been rendered flightless with an arrow in its wing, perhaps it would have torn the bear to pieces. "And that could have happened to me. That was a close call!" Tsuru said to himself with a sigh.

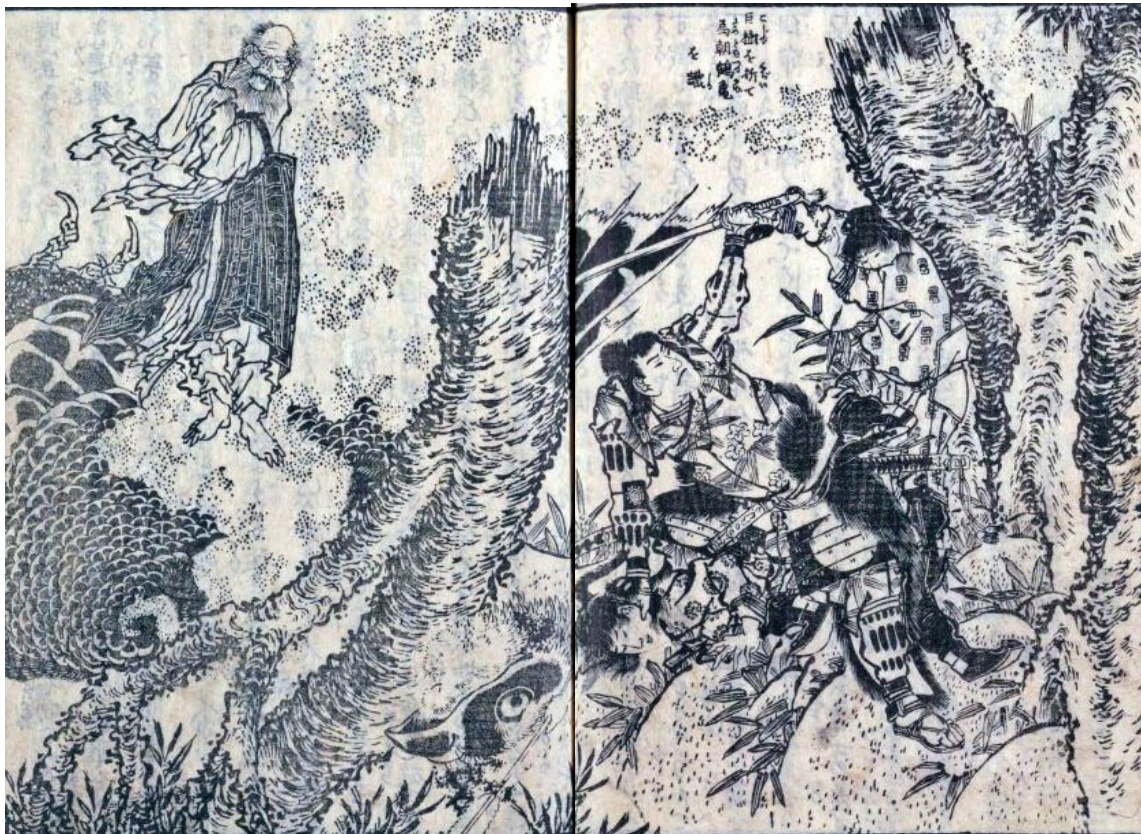
Just then, from the base of the mountain and using the clouds atop the peak as a guiding landmark, a manly man of about thirty-eight or -nine appeared, wearing leggings of deer hide,

¹ This is a reference to the famous butterfly dream in the "Qi wu lun" chapter of *Zhuangzi*.



with a quiver full of hawk-feathered hunting arrows on his back, and a sturdy bow in his hand. Rushing forth, he saw the dead eagle and bear, and smiling broadly said to himself, “When two beasts fight like that, they make a hunter’s life easy. I shot one eagle and gained two bears in the bargain. A very unusual take.” Then tossing his bow aside and taking out a dagger he cut off the eagle’s head, and from the cut arose eerily a white misty essence, finally dissipating in midair. Seeing this, Tsuru cried out, “Sir, you under the tree, please save me!” The man looked up with suspicion and demanded, “Who are you?” Tsuru made an assessment of the man: he was eight or nine feet tall with a sturdy build and an unusually powerful voice. He was not likely a hunter, and Tsuru had never heard of such a gallant man among Ri Yū’s soldiers. Concluding that he must be a spy from the palace, Tsuru announced in a loud voice, “I am a senior page in the service of Reverend Master Mōun. Last night I was taken prisoner by Ri Yū’s soldiers and was about to be decapitated when I miraculously escaped, but fell down into this tree and don’t know how to get down. If you have a rope, please throw it up and help me get down.” Mixing truth and prevarication but without unnecessary details, Tsuru made a plea. Appearing pleased, the man picked up his bow, fitted and arrow into it and, pulling the string taut, aimed at Tsuru. Alarmed,

the boy shouted, “What malice do you bear toward me that you should shoot me down? Tell me why I am not worth saving after having made such an escape. You are quite without feeling!” Then he hid himself behind leaves. Though Tsuru’s face was not visible, when the man thought of him clinging desperately to a branch like a monkey, not being made of wood or stone the man could not help feeling some pity and announced in a loud voice, “I am a Japanese commoner descended from the imperial line, Chinzei Hachirō Minamoto no Tametomo. Due to certain circumstances I left my native land and drifted to Kakeroma. Responding to an invitation from Grand Minister Ri Yū I went to Haebaru, but Ri Yū held me in suspicion and gave me three difficult tasks to accomplish, saying that if I were successful he would value my services. The first task was to block the port and Koroku, the second was to shoot down and eagle on Bengatake, and the third was to smite Mōun’s soldiers, all to be accomplished within three days. Accordingly, I immediately blocked the port and then climbed Bengatake, but though three days passed I saw no eagle, nor did I meet an enemy. But now on the morning of the fourth day I have unexpectedly shot down an eagle, so how could I let someone go who announced himself as a follower of Mōun? Though I bear no ill will toward you, a follower of that traitor cannot escape Heaven’s punishment. Prepare to accept your fate, and with good grace let me take your head.



All hail to Amitābha!” With that he released an arrow. It must have missed its mark, for it did not hit Tsuru, but struck the middle of the trunk of that ancient tall tree, causing it to split, the top branches quickly sagging to the ground. Tsuru was clinging to a branch and suffered no injuries as it touched down. He had lost his sword and had no dagger with him, but he pulled the arrow out of the eagle and tried to stab Tametomo with it. Using his bow, Tametomo easily knocked the arrow away, saying “Rather insolent, aren’t you?” Then grabbing Tsuru by the hair he forced him down on his knees and was about to cut off his head when he finally got a good look at his face, and saw that it was that of a refined youth. Even at the cost of his own life, it would be shameful for a gallant warrior to cut down a handsome boy. Thinking to spare him, he pulled him up, and at that moment another handsome boy came running up breathlessly, his small sword flashing like lightning. Deftly parrying the attack, Tametomo knocked the blade from the boy’s hand, then grappled with him until he was rendered immobile. Comparing the two boys’ faces, he said, “You both bear a close resemblance, so you must be brothers. Whose children are you? Depending on circumstances, I’ll spare your lives. Tell me who you are.” Tsuru and Kame clenched their teeth, then Tsuru said, “Even if our luck has run out and we die together as brothers, there is no one who will pity us. We’ve escaped three close brushes with death, but with the younger searching for the elder and the elder looking out for the younger, we’ve managed to stay alive. But now we’ve become your sacrificial victims. It must be retribution from a former life, so we have no resentments. Since you are not of this country, there may be no point in identifying ourselves, but please acknowledge the boldness of our hearts. When you send our heads to our parents’ enemies and they ask who we are, tell them that we are Tsuru and Kame, the orphan children of Mō Kokutei.” Upon hearing that unflinching and brave utterance, Tametomo patted his knee and exclaimed “So, that is it!” Releasing Kame from the hold of his left arm he brushed the dust off him. “This is like what the ancients said, that ‘Knowing by reputation cannot compare with meeting in person.’² I certainly will not harm you. I could not tell in one sitting the circumstances that left me unable to remain in my own country and how I drifted here, but once before in search of a crane I secretly voyaged to this land and, at the foot of Mount Kyūkyū received the aid of the Princess and Lady Ren in exchange for a gem from a giant serpent. To repay that kindness, I rescued the Princess on Little Ryukyu, then after hiding on the

² 聞名不如見面, this saying appears in *History of the Northern Dynasties (Bei shi)*, vol. 91.

shore of Kakeroma, headed for Haeburu with the intention of first destroying Mōun and then later bringing Ri Yū to justice. It was never my intention to give him wholehearted aid. I had heard from Princess Nei about your parents and your filial devotion and while I intended to rescue you, I had no way to do so. It pains me to think that I might have taken your lives only to find out later who you are. Now my joy is the same as when I obtained the crane at the foot of Mount Kyūkyū. You should now quickly go to Kakeroma and attend Princess Nei.” But Tsuru and Kame did not believe him. “We fought the soldiers at Shimakita on Little Ryukyu, but we did not see you save the Princess. We were taken captive and when we reached the palace, we were surprised to be treated with such compassion by the Reverend Master Mōun. We not only came to know of his sincerity, but he also showed us from a distance that Princess Nei is in the palace. You might deceive others with clever words, but you won’t fool us. Let’s have it out here, and even if we are killed, there’s no way we’ll go back to Kakeroma!” Unhappy to hear the boys’ derisive laughter, Tametomo admonished them, “You two are very intelligent, but you are still young and cannot tell a rock from a gem. Mōun’s using you was part of his evil designs, and it was through his sorcery that he showed you a vision of the Princess. What would I have to gain from lying to you? You were under my feet and at my mercy, but hearing who you are I decided to spare you. The truth or falsehood of what I’ve said should be obvious. I’ve spent half a lifetime devoted to martial valor and have not yet brought Ri Yū to account for his crimes. How much less, then, could you two succeed at it? Hide for the time being in Kakeroma in devotion to the Princess. When an opportune moment comes, we can plan together to avenge your parents. Give this thought, and don’t be led astray.” Struck with admiration, Kame said, “Now that I think about it, this morning the commander from the palace, Intelligence Officer Zen Kō shot at me rather than trying to save me. His trying to kill me is adequate proof of Mōun’s lies and perfidy.” Then he related what had happened, how he had tumbled down into the ravine and had searched for Tsuru, but when he came back to where he had fallen he saw his brother pinned down and tried to rescue him. Tsuru also came to realize the truth of the matter and shed tears of regret, saying to Tametomo, “We brothers were foolish to have let ourselves be taken in by Mōun, thoughtlessly sneaking into Haeburu Castle and creating such havoc, and then being too blind to recognize a hero when we saw one. You were able to split open a massive tree with a single arrow, so it was certainly out of kindness that you did not shoot me. It was very wrong of me to have doubted you. You are of the Japanese imperial line, and Princess Nei’s benefactor. Since

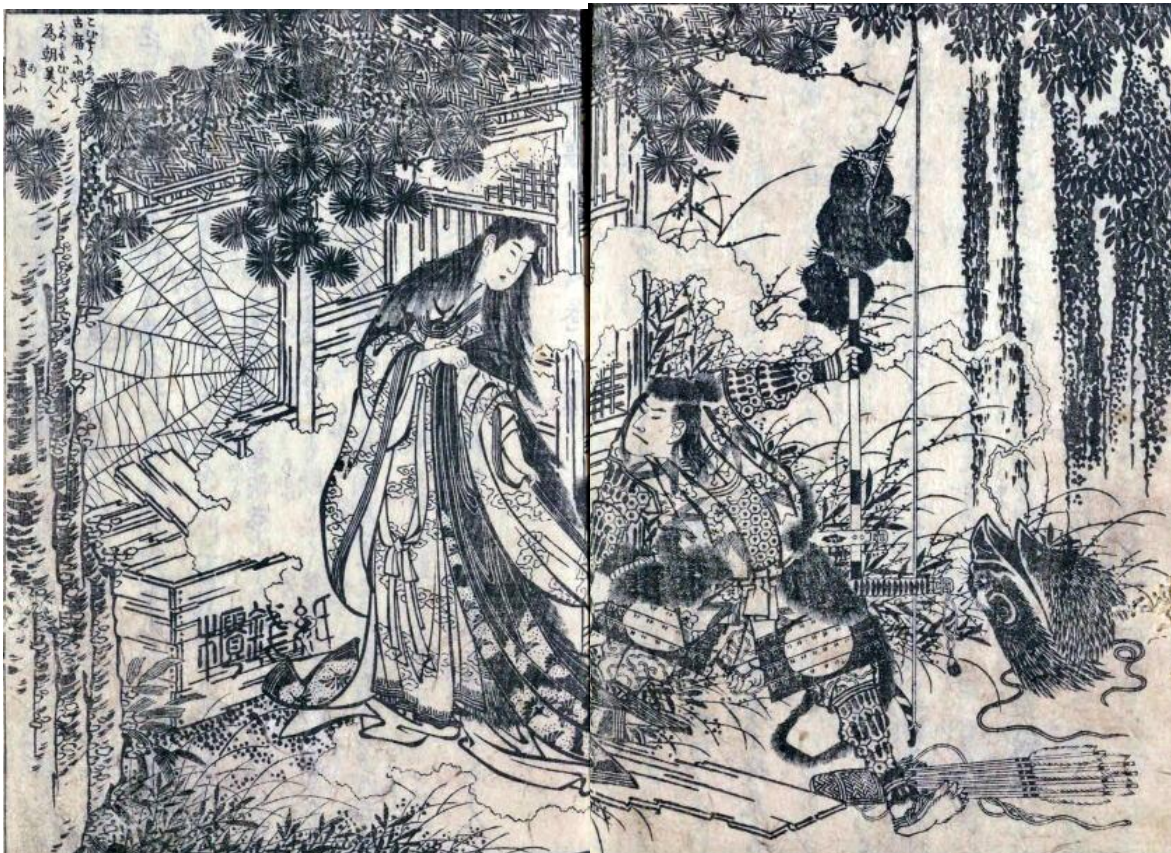
you have promised to accomplish the three tasks, if you return empty-handed Ri Yū will not make use of your services. Since I am an abandoned waif anyway, take my head to Ri Yū, and then let my brother seek vengeance from our enemy. Please slay me quickly.” Then he bent over and stretched out his neck, but his brother shoved him aside, saying, “No, I’m the one who should give up my life so that my brother can wait for the right time to slay Kumagimi and Ri Yū, and pay our debt to our parents in this life and the next.” Then he sat down with his palms pressed together, ready to die to repay a debt of gratitude. Tametomo was struck with admiration at these two youths. “Though I did not succeed in killing one of Mōun’s soldiers and thus leave one of the tasks unfulfilled, I have unexpectedly gotten these bears. It is said that bears are good omens of sons.³ In spring they emerge and climb trees, while in winter they hibernate in caves. They value valor and have a sense of righteousness. Thus, instead of your heads, I shall fool Ri Yū with the heads of these two bears. This will be my plan.” Then he told them of his secret plan. Cutting off the heads of the bears, he then cut out their gallbladders and handed them to Tsuru and Kame, saying “Bear gallbladders are not easy to come by, and they sell for a very high price. Taking some of the gall purifies one’s heart, makes one’s liver function well, improves one’s vision, and kills intestinal parasites.⁴ Sell one of them to cover your travel expenses and give the other to Princess Nei. When you arrive there you’ll hear all the details about me and about my late wife. And whatever you do, don’t let yourselves come under suspicion. Now hurry!” Accepting his assignment, the brothers kowtowed before him and replied, “Truly you are a man of benevolence and righteousness. The debt of gratitude we owe you for our renewed life is greater than Eagle Nest Mountain. Fate is as unpredictable as the clouds floating overhead, sometime concealing and sometimes revealing the orb of the moon,⁵ all a matter of karmic cause and effect. We could not fully express here all of our sorrows and joys. If our lives are preserved and an opportunity comes, we hope to meet you again. We shall seek passage to Kakeroma and relate all of these matters to the Princess.” Then the brothers stood up together and made their way through the dew-drenched ravine, their sleeves flapping in the morning breeze.

³ The line 维熊 … 男子之祥 appears in the “Minor Odes” of the *Shijing*.

⁴ This line is taken verbatim from the Ming dynasty pharmacological handbook *Bencao gangmu* (*Compendium of Materia Medica*) by Li Shizhen (1518-1593).

⁵ These lines include many plays on words.

After seeing Tsuru and Kame off until they disappeared behind the trees, Tametomo tied up the heads of the bears and the eagle with wisteria vines and, hanging them on his bow slung over his shoulder, followed an untrodden path until he came out at the foot of Bengatake. It was about the time when conch shell horns were announcing that it was noon. He came upon a village of twenty or thirty humble abodes, dwellings of woodcutters and hunters. All had been ransacked and damaged, and everyone, young or old, male or female, had either been cut down, wounded, or was sitting by the path weeping. Tametomo could not bear to look on, and asked what had happened. They answered, "This area is under the jurisdiction of Haeburu, and Reverend Master Mōun's merciless commander, Zen Kō or whatever his name is, came to attack Haeburu. It did not go as planned, and perhaps thinking that if they went back without accomplishing anything they would lose face, so they rampaged through our village." Upon hearing this disheartening tale, Tametomo said, "Where are those soldiers? I want their heads, and I'll slaughter every one of them!" The villager replied, "That happened at daybreak, so they're far away by now. Please don't say such things. I don't know where you're from, but if you're going to Haeburu, please plead our case to the Grand Minister. That is all we ask." Then Tametomo took a packet of medicine out of his breast pocket and gave it to them, offering



consolation and saying, “I’m a castaway from Japan, and my name is Tametomo. I carry this medicine about with me. It’s very effective on wounds. Please share it with each other and apply it. When I arrive at Haeburu, I’ll make a report of your conditions.” The villagers were very pleased to receive the medicine.

Tametomo regretted not having encountered Zen Kō, but since that could not be helped, he left the village and, hastening toward Kawara, entered a dense forest at the base of Bengatake. There were no paths through it, and little space between the trees. In the deep shadows there was an old shrine to the mountain god. When he reached the shrine, the eagle’s head attached to his bow tumbled off. He picked it up and reattached it only to have it tumble off again. “How annoying!” he thought as he picked it up. Then he noticed that in front of the ancient shrine was a large offertory box. Thinking to himself that this would be of good use, he approached it. The shrine was very dilapidated, with fox and rabbit tracks all about and owls nesting in the beams. What god was venerated there? No tablet was hanging in the eaves and there was no object of worship inside, so an offertory box seemed superfluous at a shrine where no one came to pray. But thinking that it would be quite suitable to offer these three heads, he opened the lid and was surprised to find a beautiful woman hiding inside. They exchanged looks of surprise and suspicion. Catching the sleeve of the woman as she stood up and climbed out of the box, he got a close look at her. Her skin was as white as snow and her long black tresses were thick and lustrous. A marvelous scent lingered in her well-worn robe, which was by no means of shabby appearance. Indeed, just like Xi Shi before she entered the Wu Palace, she possessed the special elegance of a wild flower,⁶ or the beauty that Komachi praised when she wrote of the jeweled curtain.⁷ Was she a goddess? Or mortal? Read the next chapter to find out.

⁶ Xi Shi, one of the four renowned beauties of ancient China, was a peasant girl given to King Fuchu (r. 495-473 BCE) of Wu by Goujian (r. 496-465 BCE) of Yue. The “elegance of a wild flower” is a line from vol. 33 of the 1627 anthology *Xingshi Hengyan* (*Stories to Awaken the World*) compiled by Feng Menglong (1574-1646).

⁷ This refers to a verse in the noh play *Ōmu Komachi*.

Chapter Fifty-One

Entering Haeburu Castle, the enchantress charms Ri Yū,
A schemer sends to Kakeroma to receive the Princess.

At a shrine for a mountain god at the foot of Bengatake, Chinzei Hachirō Tametomo opened an offertory box and surprisingly a beautiful woman emerged from it. Since it was all very unexpected, he grabbed the hem of her robe when she tried to flee and asked her what had happened, but she was so frightened that for a time she was unable to answer. After repeated questioning she finally replied, “I am the daughter of the headman of Hoji Village, and my name is Aronia [*Kaidō*]. Last autumn, I was selected to serve as Waitress to the King and was to go to the royal palace in the capital, but because of disturbances there I was unfortunately not able to go. As I was spending my time in useless confinement, early this morning the cruel commander of Reverend Master Mōun’s forces, Zen Kō, came pouring into our village at the head of a large number of soldiers and with no regard for the aged or infirm slaughtered everyone, including my parents and siblings. I miraculously escaped their blades, but afraid that they still might come after me I ran to this old shrine and hid myself. If you are also one of Holy Sovereign Mōun’s junior pages and take pleasure in cutting down the innocent, then there’s no longer any reason to value my life. Halfheartedly living on in the world and seeing its sorrow through tears would be like the diving women on the shore, their sleeves perpetually wet, never to rise to the surface again.¹ But if you are not a soldier from the capital, but rather in favor with the Lord of Haeburu, then please go with me to plead the cause for me, my family and the country, and give vent to my anger. Then she lifted her voice in wailing, like a plover separated from its mates or like the celestial maiden whose robe of feathers was lost on the pine at Yogo.² Listening carefully to her account, Tametomo frowned and said, “No, I am not one of Mōun’s soldiers. I am a castaway from Japan, and my name is Tametomo. I have recently come to Haeburu, and shall make an appeal for all you have suffered. But even if you were in a helpless situation, to abandon your parents and siblings as they were slaughtered and flee leaves something to be desired in terms of

¹ This line contains numerous word plays.

² According to a well-known folktale, celestial maidens would descend in the form of swans, hang their feathered garments on a tree and swim in Lake Yogo (in present-day Shiga Prefecture). One day, a man who was passing by stole one of the feathered robes, and would only return it to the maiden if she promised to marry him. She did, but one day years later found the robe, put it on, and flew back up into the heavens.

filial piety. Nevertheless, since you are a woman without moral training, I cannot hold that against you. If you wish, I shall take you to Haebaru. Please get into the box.” Feeling reassured, Aronia wiped her tears and bowed several times before Tametomo. Then having her hide in the box as before and also tossing the eagle and bear heads inside, he closed the lid and carried it on his back. The sun was already setting by the time he arrived at Haebaru.

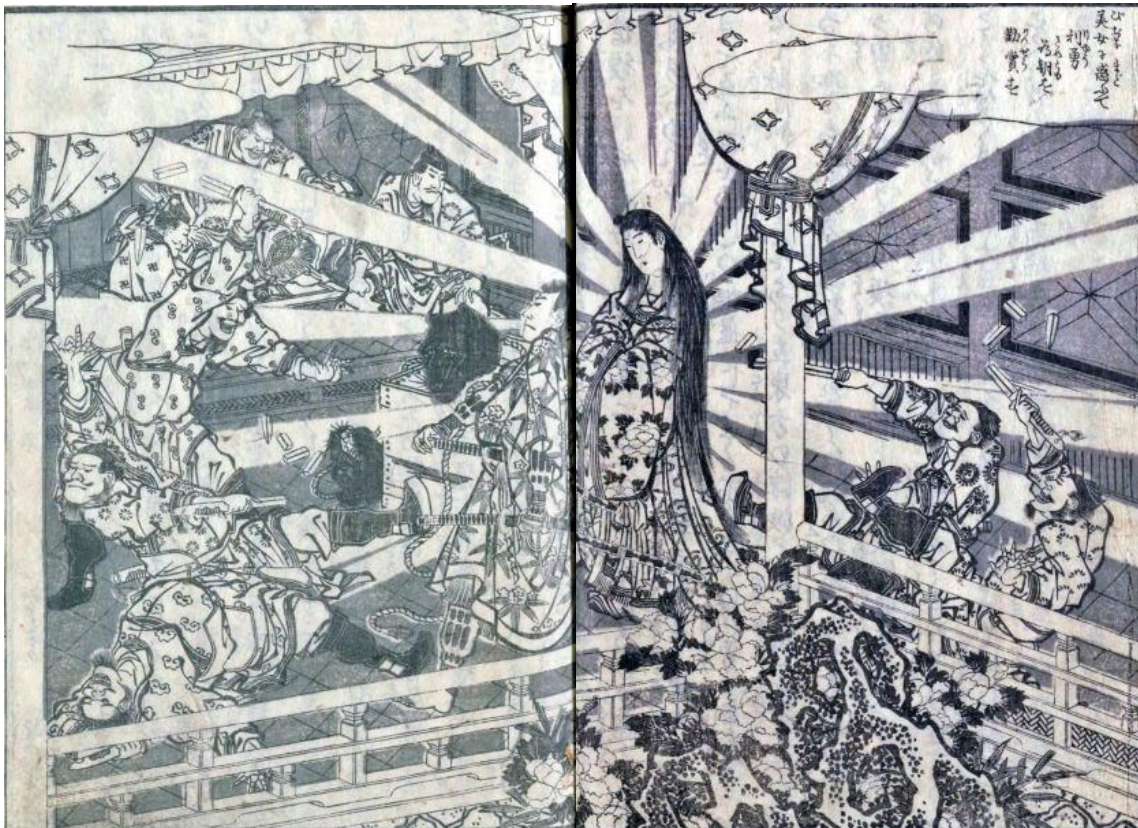
Grand Minister Ri Yū had strictly commanded the junior pages guarding the four castle gates, saying, “Tametomo has not kept his promise to complete the assigned tasks within three days. Even if he returns today, you absolutely must not let him in the castle. If he enters through any of the gates, you will be held criminally liable according to the martial code.” They all acceded to the charge and, reinforcing the guards at the front and rear gates, mounted a defense not unlike one anticipating an enemy. Unaware of all that, Tametomo attempted to enter with the offertory box on his back, whereupon the guards hurriedly lifted up their poles, obstructing the way and reviling him, “Hey, Tametomo, it’s very brazen of you to come back shamelessly after having broken your promise of three days. We’ve been commanded by our lord not to allow you to set foot inside. If you value your life, then get lost while you’re still lucky enough to have your head on your shoulders!” Infuriated, Tametomo raged, “That’s no more than the chirping of a bunch of little sparrows. You don’t know what you’re up against. I have my own plans in mind. Don’t try to stop me!” Then kicking aside the poles that were arrayed against him on all sides, he was about to enter when they wielded their poles shouting “This is an outrage!” and attacked him. Thinking nothing of it, Tametomo grabbed the poles, lances, and halberds that descended on him like a summer downpour, pulling them away from their bearers, breaking them and throwing them aside. Then he strode inside as if the place were deserted. Seeing this, the junior pages guarding the inner gates were astounded and bolted the gates shut to keep him out. Tametomo strode up confidently with the offertory box on his back, placed his hands on the gate and with a loud cry pushed against it, causing the bolt to break and the doors to swing open. That show of strength was greater than that of Fan Kuai who rescued Pei Gong at the Hong Gate.³ As the gate was forced open the soldiers standing by it inside were pushed back suddenly, dozens of them suffering concussions to their heads, sustaining wounds, or breaking the backs, leaving them half

³ Fan Kuai (242-189 BCE) defeated a Chu force at Hong Gate, saving Pei Gong, who would become Emperor Gaozu of Han (256-195 BCE; r. 202-195 BCE). This incident is described in the “Xiang Yu benji” chapter of *Shiji* (*Records of the Grand Historian*).

dead. Those who managed to escape injury huddled together with their heads down, like sheep before a ferocious tiger. Tongue-tied and with arms folded, they timidly let him pass through. Hearing of this, Grand Minister Ri Yū was greatly alarmed, and with deep resentment toward Shōju muttered a command to assemble the lords and captains, having each take up arms and then go out into the main hall along with twenty senior pages trained in martial arts, each bearing short bows. They were to wait on both sides, and if Tametomo were to make his way into the inner hall, they should rain arrows down on him. Shōju alone was greatly displeased to hear such instructions and, dashing into the main hall remonstrated with Ri Yū, saying, “Tametomo is a peerless brave warrior, and it will be impossible to subdue him by force. For the welfare of the country, there would be nothing better than to gain the allegiance of such a person. I beg of your excellency immediately to have swords, bows, and arrows laid down, to soften your words and to receive him with courtesy. If you do not, then it will be an occasion of turning good fortune into misfortune.” At that, Ri Yū’s eyes opened wide and he raged, “You still don’t understand, do you? By recommending a villain like that, you’re only inviting another misfortune, not unlike the beast. It’s outrageous that instead of arresting him and tying him up, you keep raising objections. If you have even the slightest idea that you are wrong about this, then you will take Tametomo’s head and show it to me.” His words of condemnation were forceful, but he could not stop shaking. Just then, Tametomo entered calmly, surrounded by twenty or thirty junior pages, their spears forming a veritable curtain. The lords, captains, and even the senior pages who had until now been in such high spirits exchanged listless glances as if they had no idea what to do. Trying not to show his anger, Ri Yū blurted out in a voice resembling a pig squeal, “You vagrant from an eastern land have come here shamelessly having broken your promise. Though you have no place here, what madness brings you to me? Even if you possess the bravery of Fan Kuai, don’t I have the authority of Xiang Yu?⁴ Though one might destroy a fortress, one must not break one’s word. This is very brazen of you.” Tametomo responded to this reviling with a guffaw. “What strange things I hear from you. The infant ruler is now in your excellency’s charge, and it is your responsibility to quell disturbances with truth and justice, yet saying incoherent things you will not admit a righteous warrior. Won’t that only lead the people to lie? Now Bengatake is far from here, and rivers and steep mountains present many obstacles. Not having wings I could not very

⁴ Xiang Yu (232-202 BCE), a rebel leader who overthrew the Qin dynasty but became a rival to Han Gaozu for control of China, and was thus an enemy to Fan Kuai.

well fly there. I was on that mountain last night, and since it was a distant path I have only now returned, but I have not broken the promise of three days. Moreover, since I have completed all three assigned tasks, to calculate the number of days as wasted and give no reward is to steal meritorious service. Please look at this.” Then taking the box off his back he set it down. Ri Yū still did not believe him and shook his head. “You have your nerve to say such things! I think you are in league with Mōun, and this is surely a suspicious box you have brought from him. Men, smash this box to pieces and examine its contents!” The junior pages responded at once, aligning their spears in order to thrust in unison. Tametomo shouted “What impertinence!” and glared at them. Shrinking at the sight of his forcefulness, the men all fell back on their buttocks. Standing on both sides of Ri Yū were Lord Ō Kaku and Captain Ro Roku, both high officials with reputations for martial skill and valor. Tucking up their sleeves they ran forth and tried to open the box but were instantly blinded and fell back. Seeing this, the senior pages assumed that Tametomo had pushed them over and, in order to prevent any harm from befalling Ri Yū, aimed at Tametomo and shot arrows in rapid succession like a swarm of locusts. None harmed Tametomo, but one did strike the box, causing it to fall over. A cry came from within, and a beautiful woman came tumbling out. She was like the spring moon appearing through rifts in the



clouds, shedding its light over blossoming treetops, and she exuded a greater fragrance than that bush clover brought to the capital from Miyagino.⁵ Overcome by such an unexpected surprise, Ri Yū could only narrow his eyes in amazement and utter “What is this?” The lords, captains, junior pages, and senior pages all unconsciously dropped their weapons, stroked their sidelocks, and adjusted their court caps. Their attention was wholly drawn to her appearance as they gazed at her from every angle.

Tō Shōju, who until that moment had kept silent, immediately arose from his seat and approached Tametomo, questioning him, “Young master, in this time of chaos and disorder people have come to regard each other with suspicion. And that is why his excellency is cautious about taking people into his service. He will always be inclined to doubt. But please tell me why this woman is accompanying you.” Smiling, Tametomo replied, “Various events led up to it. Yesterday on Bengatake I shot a great bird and when I pursued it down to the foot of Eagle Nest Mountain to finish it off, there came running two boys, apparently brothers, dressed in such-and-such attire, pursued by enemies. Apparently unable to escape, they stood their ground and engaged in a bloody fight in which they prevailed. As I watched this from beneath a tree, I heard the boys taking council with each other, ‘Let’s hurry back to the palace and report to Mōun.’ I surmised that they were allied with the traitor Mōun and dashed out from under the tree, slaying both of them and taking their heads. Then their heads vanished, and in their place two bear heads appeared. It was the strangest thing I had ever seen, but I cut off the eagle’s head and, carrying all of the heads together, set out toward Bengatake. I came to Hoji Village, where I found lying by the side of the road woodcutters and mountaineers who had been wounded by Mōun’s rebel troops. I had unexpectedly come across this scene, and though I heard what had happened, it was too late to pursue and destroy the rebel forces. I just took medicine out of my breast pocket and applied it to their wounds. Then proceeding on into the forest I met this woman by a shrine to the mountain god. When I asked what had happened, she said that her name was Aronia, that she was the daughter of the chieftain of Hoji Village, and that when her parents and siblings were slain by the rebel soldiers, she alone had barely managed to escape, hiding in that shrine. She had previously been summoned to go to the palace and wait on the King, but because of Mōun’s

⁵ Kamo no Chōmei’s (1155-1216) *Mumyōshō* tells of a journey made by Tachibana no Tamenaka (1014-1085) to Miyagino in northeastern Japan, where he dug up a bush clover (*hagi*), putting it in a chest and bringing it back to the capital, where it was greatly admired.

sedition was not able to go, though she had already received the necessary attire. She requested of me, ‘If you are going to Haeburu, then please help me by telling of our suffering and pleading our case.’ Not being made of wood or stone, I could not very well ignore her grief, but if I brought her along, more time would elapse and I would not be allowed into the castle. All I desire now is to report the situation to your excellency. I harbor no other ambitions. Please pardon my impertinence.” Thus mixing fact and fiction, he related in detail what had happened, then pulling the offertory box to his side, took out the three heads, offering them to Shōju. Without waiting for Shōju’s response, Ri Yū stood up from his seat and facing Tametomo, said, “Though I possess a better eye than most for talent and am magnanimous, because I was lacking wisdom I did not recognize a true hero. I hope you will not hold that against me. The boys that you slew were the sons of Mō Kokutei, named Tsuru and Kame, and were seeking vengeance against me.” Then relating the events of the previous night, he continued, “But because of my loyal devotion, Kinmanmon had pity on me and their plan was foiled. Tsuru was taken prisoner, and though Shōju proposed a plan that would have spared him, it did not go as anticipated when threatened by Mōun’s troops lying in wait and by their leader Zen Kō, and as a result my trusted retainers Chō Hyō and Ri Ko lost their lives. But now that I think about it, Tsuru and Kame were merely illusions generated by Mōun’s sorcery. They were both surely beheaded when they were taken captive at the monument of Akase. I am pleased that, thanks to your martial valor, I now finally understand what Mōun was plotting. And what is more, your having brought this beautiful woman, Aronia, here to tell of what she has suffered demonstrates your righteousness and sincerity, and must be rewarded. Though I come from a distinguished family that has held high positions for generations, and though I have never wanted for any material advantages, I have never seen such a beautiful woman. Yu Shun did not reject Ehuang or Nüying.⁶ Nor did Cao Mengde hesitate to take the two Qiao sisters to The Bronze Bird Terrace.⁷ Even if I now take in this beautiful woman, with Tametomo’s valor and Shōju’s wisdom, I have no fear of Mōun’s sorcery. Truly, among men the young master is a dragon, and among women Aronia is a blossom. I shall use the services of that dragon, and cherish that blossom. Considering the matter carefully,

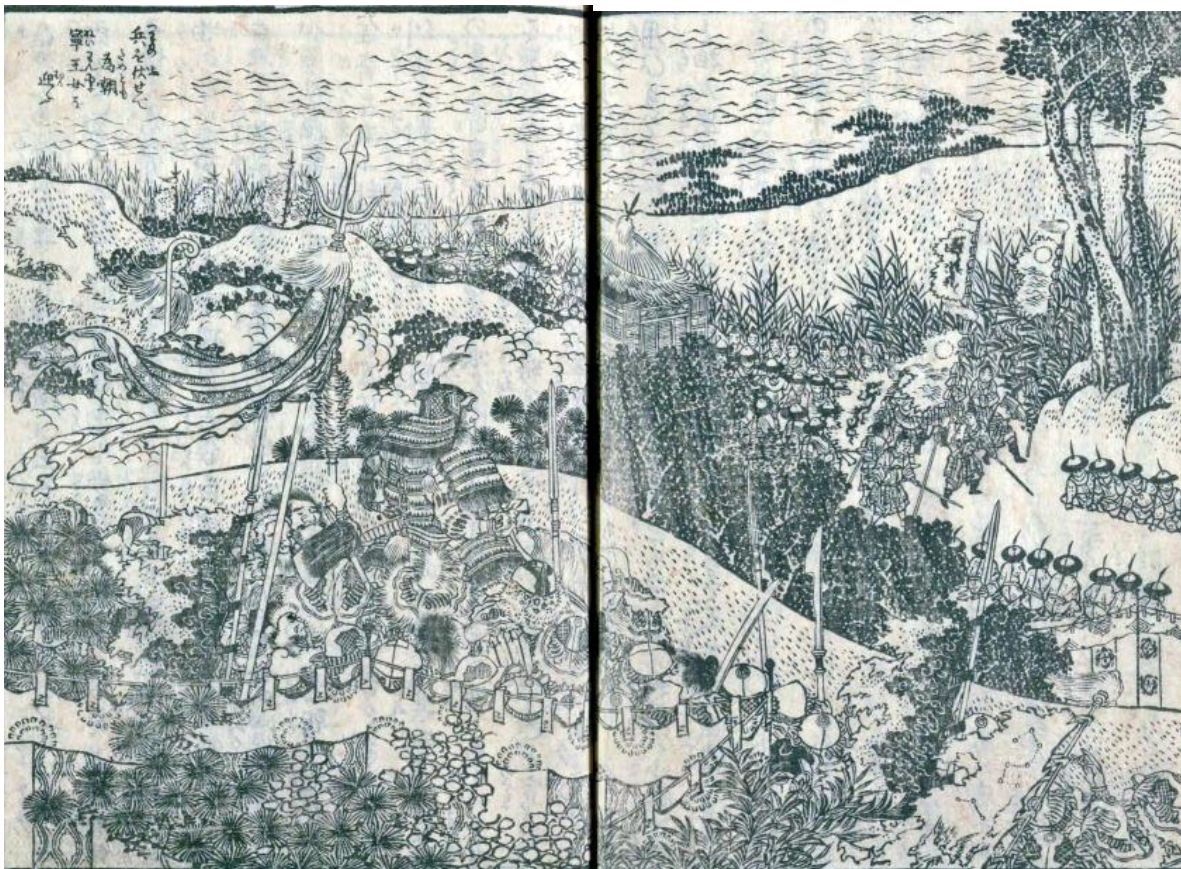
⁶ Ehuang and Nüying were the daughters of legendary emperor Yao (2356-2256 BCE), who gave them to legendary emperor Shun (2356-2256 BCE) as wives when he yielded the throne.

⁷ Cao Mengde (155-220), better known as Cao Cao, took the two Qiao sisters, both famed for their beauty, as concubines, taking them to his recently completed palace, Bronze Sparrow Terrace (Tongquetai). This is described in a poem included in chapter 44 of *Romance of the Three Kingdoms*.

to the south of Ōzato in Sannan province is Tama Castle in Chinen, while the capital is not far to the north, so that is the *magiri* that is our first line of defense. It gives me great pleasure to make the young master Lord of Ōzato. From Yonahara, Yokota, and Yunakuni all the way to Shimafukuro and Takamiya Castle, including eighteen villages, will all be under your jurisdiction. I shall send two hundred mounted soldiers to guard Ōzato castle, and expect much meritorious service from you.” Ri Yū was beaming with pleasure as he offered this reward. But Tametomo shook his head and declined, saying, “I have not rendered service worthy of that. In bringing this woman here, it was never my desire to be made lord.” Shōju hurriedly came forth and urged him, saying, “Young master, why should you be so modest. As they say, ‘A wise man avails himself of the people and the country naturally prospers.’⁸ It will be for the benefit of the country that his excellency values your service. Why should you refuse?” Tametomo responded, “In that case, I have one wish. If it is granted, then I shall protect Ōzato. However, it will not likely be allowed.” But nodding his head, Ri Yū said, “No matter what it is, I’ll grant it.” Then accepting the offer of an office, Tametomo joined the company of lords and, taking his seat among them, said with fervency, “What I desire has to do with Princess Nei. If your excellency wishes to show your utmost devotion to the country, you should receive Princess Nei and install her in Ōzato castle. Then I shall serve as her deputy general. If you do that, then the people will all laud your excellency’s sincere devotion, and Mōun will lose support.” Ri Yū thought it over for a while, then hedged, saying, “What you say sounds reasonable, but Princess Nei was slain by Tō Shōju at the command of the former King, and is no longer alive. She who claims to be the Princess must be a fake, and it is beyond my powers to ascertain her whereabouts.” Tametomo responded, “No, that would be a simple matter. Some time ago at Shimakita on Little Ryukyu, I unexpectedly saved Princess Nei from mortal danger and took her to Kakeroma, where she is in hiding. If your excellency would receive her, you would gain a reputation as a leader possessing wisdom and valor. Please supply two or three hundred brave warriors to go to that island, and I shall lie in wait to prevent any actions by Mōun’s rebel troops. Whenever any plans are made involving land or sea troop movements, Mōun’s all-seeing eye will immediately pick up on it, but he will have no recourse. My wife, Shiranui, possessed wisdom and valor in no way inferior to that of a manly man, but unfortunately in the past eighth month became the victim of a tempest at sea and sank beneath the waves. But strangely enough, at some point in time her spirit

⁸ The source of this citation is unclear.

has possessed Princess Nei, whose manners and disposition are now indistinguishable from those of my wife. This bond goes back to the time when, in search of a crane that had been released, at the foot of Mount Kyūkyū I met the princess and Lady Ren, and exchanged a gem with them for that crane. But that gem, which I had obtained from a giant serpent, turned out to be of no avail for her, and she was again banished. I was greatly sorrowed to hear of that, and my mind turned to the past, and my deceased wife responded with affection.” Then he continued to relate in detail what had happened, and showing no sign of reserve said “If you accept my plan, then there would be no better fortune for the land, both generally and individually.” At that, Shōju slapped his knee and concurred with what he had heard, saying “What the Lord of Ōzato has said is not lacking in fidelity. It was a lie created by Mōun that the Princess is the illegitimate child of Mō Kokutei. There can be no doubt that the Princess is still alive, but if she is possessed by the spirit of Tametomo’s late wife, then she both is and is not the Princess. Please allay your doubts, send messengers, and accept the spirit of that heroine. Then as a couple they will be of great benefit to your excellency and to the country. Why hesitate?” However Ri Yū would not answer one way or the other, but had other things on his mind, thinking to himself, “If I take in Aronia and lavish



my affections on her, people will accuse me of lechery. In order to avoid such disparagement, if I give this woman calling herself the Princess to Tametomo as wife, then by comparison no one would blame me. Even if she is the Princess, she would only be the wife of a lord. Even if Mōun is destroyed and the Prince dies prematurely, it would be impossible for the princess to claim the throne. Then I would have control over the three provinces and all islands, and would become King. Who could oppose me?" With such a scheme in mind, he smiled broadly and said, "Truly, human affection cannot be taken away. When the late wife of the Lord of Ōzato, Shiranui, took possession of the Princess, then the Princess effectively became your wife. We should receive her right away so that you can resolve to be together in this life and the next. Shōju, lead two hundred soldiers in five warships, and go ahead of Tametomo to Kakeroma." Greatly surprised by this, Tametomo addressed Ri Yū, "Though Shiranui's spirit sometimes abides in the Princess, I have no intention of marrying again. I am a mere vagabond from an eastern land, and it would be humiliating for the Princess if I were to become the son-in-law to the King. Not only that, but I would be despised by the common people. And so that alone I must decline." But Ri Yū would not hear of it and responded in all seriousness, "The matter has already been settled. Shōju will set out this evening. Through Kumagimi I'll inform the Prince, so you prepare your court attire so that you can have an audience with him." Then taking Aronia by the hand, he led her into the Crown Prince's chamber, followed by Ō Kaku, Ro Roku, and the senior pages.

Chapter Fifty-Two

In his tall tower, Mōun learns of movement on the sea,
At Ōzato, Tametomo marries the princess.

That evening the Lord of Kochihira, Tō Shōju, quickly divided his men into parties and had them prepare to disembark from the port of Koroku. The following day they set out under fair winds, rowing toward Kakeroma. Possessing extraordinary intelligence, Shōju turned various thoughts over in his mind, saying to himself “Ri Yū is like a dog bedded down on a brocade cushion, possessing no particular talent and despising fish for food. And if an unfamiliar person comes along—even a sage—all he can do is bark at him. Thus he did not acknowledge Tametomo as a hero of Japan and at first refused his services. But now as a reward for having brought a beautiful woman Tametomo has immediately been made a lord. At least one could say that he engaged a wise man and employed a warrior. At any rate, it is truly good fortune for the country that Tametomo was made Lord of Ōzato, and it is through the virtue of the Tenson line that the Princess will be able to return to society. This is truly worthy of celebration.” He was greatly pleased with this outcome.

Prior to this, Tametomo had properly attired himself and was kneeling at the foot of the stairs in the main hall, awaiting an audience with the Prince. Not even a year had passed since the Prince’s birth, and so it was rather like meeting a doll. He was on the throne in Kumagimi’s embrace. Then Tametomo was summoned up to the dais where he was appointed Lord of Ōzato, given the Princess as his wife, and commanded “You are to excel in devoted service to destroy Mōun.” Tametomo expressed thanks for their gracious favor, then withdrew. The other lords and captains saw him off with amazement, muttering “Well now, that’s an unusual stroke of good luck!” Many of them burned with envy and resentment. The next morning, guided by two assistant junior pages and accompanied by twenty soldiers, Tametomo set out for Ōzato castle, where he met with officers and soldiers stationed there. He also soon assembled the chieftains of the eighteen villages, announcing plans to lighten tax burdens, revise regulations, rewarding those who complied and punishing those who disobeyed. Thus there were no officials who indulged in corruption and no common folk who rebelled. All felt like infants who had found their mother, and were pleased at their good fortune of having such a good leader. After three days had passed, Tametomo assembled the soldiers stationed in the castle and instructed them,

saying, "Counting the days since Tō Shōju set out for Kakeroma, his return cannot be far off. Tonight at the hour of the rat [midnight] I shall lead a hundred and fifty soldiers out of the castle to camp by the mountains at Mawashi to await Shōju's return. Last night I sent a spy to reconnoiter the lay of the land there. There is a large river between Mawashi and Azahira, but it forks upstream. Where it empties into the sea there is a tall peak on the east side of Naga River. This is a perfect place for troops to hide. If you wish to distinguish yourself with your service, you must have a sense of justice. Cowards who retreat before the enemy will not be forgiven. Make sure you take that to heart." Then having quickly organized into parties, at the hour of the rat one hundred and fifty men secretly set out from the castle, sequestering themselves in the shadows of the trees between Nieha and Naga River northeast of Mawashi to await the return of Shōju with the Princess. Then it suddenly occurred to Tametomo that Tsuru and Kame had gone to Kakeroma and were likely still there. If that became known to Shōju and if he were to inform Ri Yū, it would be difficult to save them. As he was considering various things, it seemed to him that Shōju was not truly committed to helping Ri Yū. And wasn't Shōju's service actually devotion to the Prince? If not, there must be some other reason. Tametomo had heard that when on the previous night Tsuru had fallen into the well and then been taken prisoner, it was only Shōju who argued that he should be spared. So even if he knows that the boys are in Kakeroma that is no cause for concern. But as he thought of other people's children, his mind turned to his own son, Sutemaru, and he wondered what had become of him. Was he among those no longer in this world, along with Kiheiji and the Takama couple? Separated from wife, child, and retainers and having drifted here alone, now the lord of a castle, even if he were to accomplish meritorious deeds and make a name for himself, with whom could he share riches and honor? He who takes up bow and arrow spends his life in the service of others, and he was now subordinate to a small-minded man like Ri Yū. As he thought of the absurdity of going through life that way, his valiant heart could only lament his fate.

But to turn to another part of our account, Tō Shōju set sail under favorable winds and, covering many leagues rapidly, docked at Kakeroma the following day. When he disembarked and looked about on the shore, the island seemed deserted. He then found an elderly couple hiding in the hollow of an enormous tree and asked them what had happened. They fearfully crawled out and said, "Early this morning the islanders espied warships being rowed toward this island. They were very suspicious, supposing it to be the forces of Holy Sovereign Mōun, and

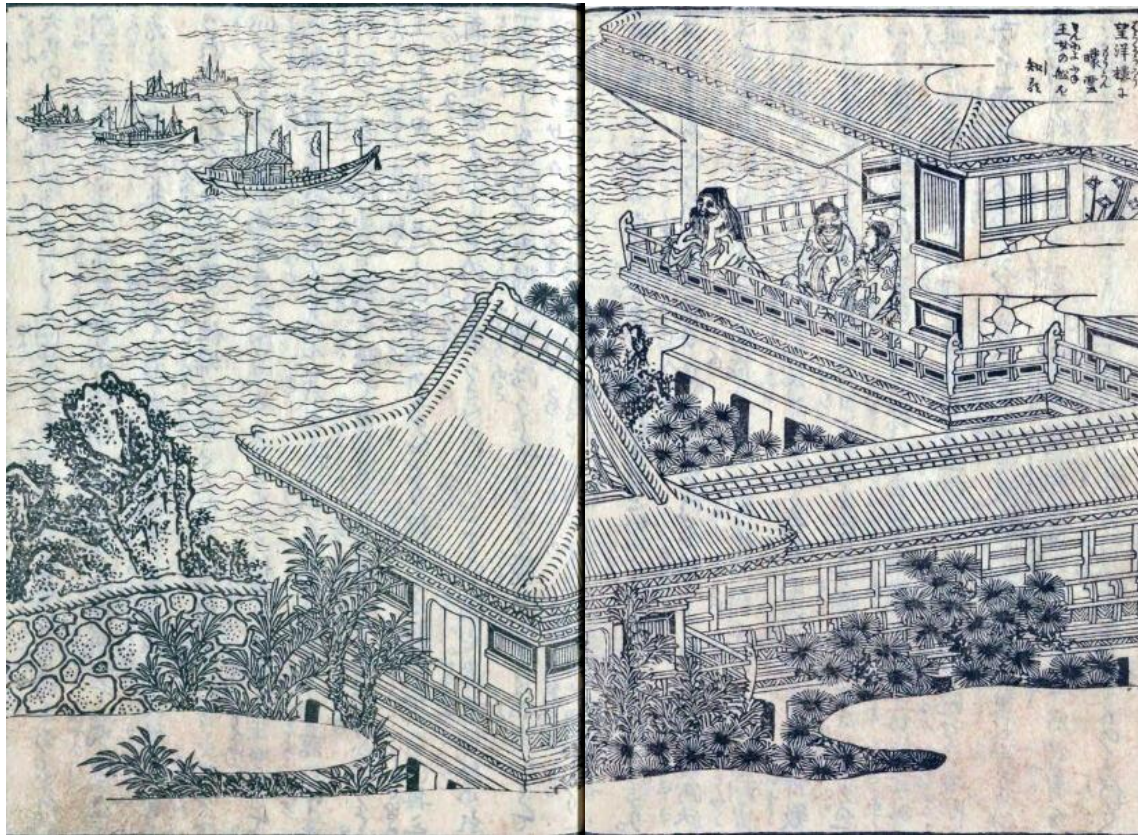
hurriedly fled deep into the mountains. We are too old to climb mountains, so we hid here.”

Shōju laughed upon hearing this, then explained courteously, “You have nothing to fear. I am Lord Tō Shōju, and have come here at the appeal of Tametomo and the command of the Prince to take Princess Nei back to Haeburu. Please convey this to the island chieftain.” Greatly pleased to hear that, the couple took up their canes and toddled up the mountain path. A while later they returned with the island chieftain, Rin Daiyu, and the three of them kowtowed before Shōju, who beckoned to the chieftain to come closer. He then told him that Tametomo had been appointed Lord of Ōzato, that Tametomo had said that the Princess was on this island, and that he had come at the Prince’s command and by the arrangement of the Grand Minister Ri Yū to receive the Princess. Rin Daiyu was greatly pleased, and said, “We never imagined that things would turn out this way. When we saw boats approaching, everyone on the island, both young and old, fell into an uproar, saying ‘Those are Mōun’s punitive forces. How can we escape?’ Everyone took to the mountains to hide, but the Princess alone remained calm, saying, ‘Why all the excitement? I think those warships are from Haeburu, and have come to take me back.’ But we were nevertheless apprehensive and insisted on carrying her away and hiding her in a cave. Then when this elderly couple came and told us the truth of the matter, we felt revived and finally appreciated the Princess’s wisdom, and returned her to our home. Please come and meet with her.” Then leaving the soldiers on the shore and accompanied only by ten junior pages, Shōju followed the chieftain to his home where he had an audience with the Princess and told her of Tametomo and the Prince’s command. Thanking Shōju, she was greatly pleased but at the same time wept out of indignation toward the state of affairs in the world. She inquired and was told of the late King Shō Nei, of Lady Ren, and of the deaths of the loyal retainers Mō Kokutei and Sa Kokukitsu, whereupon her countenance projected a sort of weariness. She was pleased to hear that Tametomo had been appointed lord, and betrayed nostalgic sorrow for Sutemaru. Her manner of speaking seemed more and more like that of a Japanese and less like that of the Princess. Seeing this, Shōju sighed, realizing that what Tametomo had told them was true. As he was saying things to console her, the islanders brought fresh fish and seaweed for Shōju to dine on, all of them expressing their joy and showing boldness of spirit. Then the Princess addressed Shōju, “I am Tametomo’s former wife, and not the same as the Princess’s former self. Thus the islanders call me Princess Shiranui. From the time I hid myself on this island, two young girls have served me, one named Akaitadaki and the other Mikuma. Both are orphans. I pity them and

wish to take them to Haebaru. Would that be possible?” As he considered this, it occurred to Shōju that “Akaitadaki” was another word for “crane,” and that the characters for “Mikuma” could also be read “sankyoku,” implying “turtle.” Guessing then that the brothers Tsuru and Kame were also on this island, Shōju smiled and replied, “I don’t think there is anything wrong with taking young girls from the island to Haebaru, but the Grand Minister Ri Yū tends to harbor many suspicions. If I were to take them now without first telling him, it would likely end in disaster. I shall discuss this with the island chieftain and have him send them to Ōzato Castle in a separate small boat.” The Princess perceived Shōju’s intentions and said nothing more. Thus, though Tsuru and Kame were in the chieftain’s house, they did not meet Shōju. The next day they had fair winds, and so Shōju helped the Princess board the boat and, with the other vessels guarding both in front and in back, they rowed out into the open sea. For the islanders, the sadness of this parting was no less than when Tametomo had left them. Their voices echoed over the waves, crying “The Princess’s world will expand as she and the young master together defeat Mōun and usher in a bright new age.” It was all very moving.

At that time, Mōun was in his watchtower looking far out over the sea, and said with a note of surprise to those in attendance, “Quite unexpectedly, Ri Yū has engaged the services of a castaway and, following his council, has called the Princess back from Kakeroma and even plans to give her to that man as his wife. Her boat will arrive at the port of Koroku this evening. Those present included the member of the Council of Three, Tō Son and the Intelligence Officer Zen Kō, who were alarmed to hear this, saying “In that case, we should lead a force there and take the Princess.” But Mōun shook his head and, after looking out over the waters for a while, chuckled and disagreed, saying “That warrior Ri Yū has engaged possesses unusual ingenuity. The one guarding the Princess is Shōju, and so the boat will be equipped against anything unforeseen and there will be hundreds of soldiers lying in wait on land. Even if we succeeded in stealing the Princess away, we would suffer great losses among our soldiers. Moreover, she is not the same person that she was before, and there would be no gain in stealing her away. That is why I never sent punitive forces even though I surmised that she was in Kakeroma. Since I now know of these developments, I have devised another ingenious plan. First, I shall lead Ri Yū into self-destruction, and after that I’ll get rid of that warrior. However, the lifespan allotted to Ri Yū has not yet run its course. After another six or seven years my plan will be realized. There is no cause

for panic.” Tō Son and Zen Kō were impressed with the Holy Sovereign’s godlike scheming, offering their fulsome praise.



Just then the Princess safely arrived at the port of Koroku and soon thereafter entered Haeburu Castle, and so Tametomo returned to Ōzato Castle with his troops. Ri Yū reverentially received her, and she quickly responded to his courtesy, saying “I am Tametomo’s wife, and am called Shiranui. Your excellency’s deference toward me exceeds anything I deserve.” She did not speak in the language of Ryukyu. Amazed, Ri Yū had her installed in the Sekishōsha quarters in the castle and assigned several ladies in waiting to attend her. Upon secretly investigating everything about her, it turned out that nothing he had been told was false. He thought that since the Princess had been slain by Shōju, her spirit must have possessed another woman. This woman’s visage resembled that of the Princess, but she was not the same. Nevertheless, if I treat this woman as the Princess and give her to Tametomo as his wife, I’ll be praised by others as a just man. “Yes, that’s what I’ll do” he planned in his mind, and in the end did not suspect Shōju. He soon had diviners determine an auspicious day and had Shōju accompany her to Ōzato Castle, where the nuptials were held. Tametomo resisted to the very end, but seeing no way out, finally relented and submitted to the tying of the red cord. Their vow as a couple was profound,

like the reflection in facing mirrors. Then one day, the chieftain at Kakeroma put Tsuru and Kame into a small boat and secretly brought them to Ōzato. Tametomo summoned them and lauded their loyalty and filiality. He sent many gifts back to Kakeroma with the chieftain. Fully aware of Shōju's loyal intentions, he kept the boys sequestered in the castle, never letting them out, so no one knew of them.

Chapter Fifty-Three

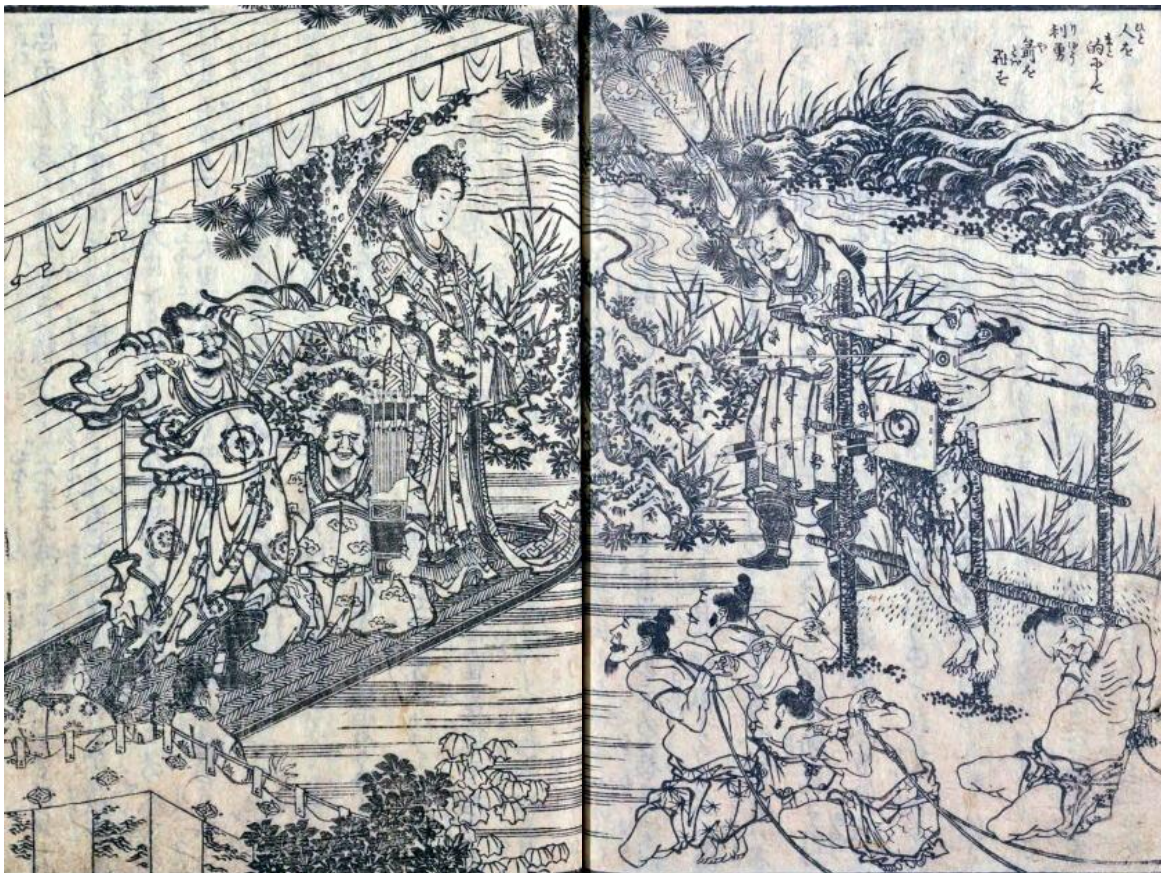
With people as targets, Ri Yū shows off his skill with the bow,
On a swift horse, Shōju reports an emergency.

The year came to an end and a new one dawned, finally ushering in warmer weather, but people's hearts were not at ease. In order to defeat Mōun, Tametomo devoted all of his time to training men and horses, and to instruct the people he established laws of reward and punishment based on benevolence and righteousness. Thus the soldiers minded their duties, and both military people and civilians found joy in their work, all assimilating Tametomo's virtue. Also possessing many feminine virtues, Princess Shiranui tended silkworms and wove cloth. Thus, Ōzato and its eighteen satellite villages were well governed.

In contrast, in Haeburu Castle the Grand Minister Ri Yū was arrogant and self-indulgent. Having obtained the beautiful woman Aronia he showered her with affection, never tiring of feasts and merrymaking through the lengthening days and even into the nights under candlelight, with endless music and song. Finding it rather scandalous, Shōju often remonstrated with him, but to no avail. Instead, Ri Yū responded, "The reason why Mōun has gone so long without invading our territory is because he fears our military might. Rather than to seek an enduring reputation for meritorious deeds, it's far better to have a cup of saké while still alive. If you don't enjoy things now, how would you deal with the regret when you're old and your life is about to end? Assisting our young sovereign, I have administered the affairs of state with no self-interest, and have worn myself out for the benefit of the people. I ought to be allowed this much recreation." Showing no sign of compunction, to support his merrymaking he oppressed the people with heavy taxation, often doing what was unlawful, while those in military service grew increasingly resentful, secretly desiring to move to Ōzato. But fearing Ri Yū's power, they did not show their discontent. And yet Ri Yū showed no regard for the afflictions of the people. He rewarded those who flattered him and punished those who dared to criticize. He placed importance only on the services of such toadies as Ō Kaku and Ro Roku, including them in the merrymaking. His arrogance exceeded that of the Ji family with their eight rows of dancers.¹

¹ In the "Eight Rows of Dancers (Ba yi)" chapter of the *Analects*: "Speaking of the head of the Ji family with his eight rows of dancers in his courtyard, 'If he has no scruples about doing this, then what might he not be willing to do?'"

After two or three years had passed in this manner, Tametomo presented a petition, saying “Our horses are fattened and we have an abundance of soldiers and provisions. With your permission, we should attack Mōun.” But Ri Yū rejected this. “Use of military arms is inauspicious. It is not what the people want. If we halfheartedly attack the capital and achieve no strategic advantage, our efforts would only backfire on us. We should just build up our defense, strengthen our fighting force, and maintain our position.” Tametomo could only grit his teeth as he idled away the time. Seeing this situation, Shōju feared that some disaster might befall him and wished to return to Kochibira, so he secretly devised a plan with his trusted retainers to circulate a rumor in the castle that the soldiers stationed at Kochibira, seeing how long their lord remained away at Haebaru, were turning to treachery, and were about to burn down the castle there and surrender to Mōun. The rumor spread like wildfire and soon reached the ears of Ri Yū, who was greatly alarmed. Summoning Shōju, he commanded, “Since you have been here such a long time, I hear that the soldiers at Kochibira are about to defect to the enemy. Return immediately, arrest all rebels, fortify the castle, and don’t leave it.” Since that was what Shōju had planned, he readily agreed and, accompanied by his retainers, returned to Kochibira Castle that very day, never to



report again the Haebaru. Without Shōju around, Ri Yū felt less constrained than ever, frolicking with Aronia and indulging his tastes for drink and sex, oblivious to the passage of time. Since five or six years had passed, Tametomo grew very impatient and again sent a petition from Ōzato expressing his desire to attack the capital. Upon reading it, Ri Yū laughed derisively and said, “Well then, I’ll train the forces myself and let them know the power of bow and arrow.” Then he had peasants who were in arrears in payment of taxes arrested, binding them securely at the archery field, then using them as targets, found pleasure in shooting them dead. Such an atrocity was no less than those of King Jie of Xia and King Zhou of Yin,² and anyone—whether aware or not—who muttered in disparagement things like “The Grand Minister is more fearsome than the beast of misfortune” would soon be found out by Aronia, who would then report it to Ri Yū. He would have the offenders arrested and, saying that he wanted to test a new sword, would cut them down with his own hand. Thus, many innocent lives were lost.

Then one day as Ri Yū together with Aronia ascended the turret of the castle and surveyed the comings and goings of the people, her countenance changed and she began to cry. Surprised, Ri Yū asked what was wrong. Her sobbing increasing, she said, “If your excellency wishes to know what is on my mind, first have those attending us withdraw.” Nodding, Ri Yū had the ladies in waiting and the senior pages leave their presence, then after he asked again and again, Aronia’s tears finally stopped and she said, “Your excellency’s wisdom extends far and wide, but you are unaware of trouble that is about to press down on you. Tametomo has long defended Ōzato Castle, and has won the hearts of the people. And claiming that he intends to defeat Mōun he has been training troops, but he is in collusion with Shōju in Kochibira to eliminate your excellency. Just look at the traffic around this castle. Much of it is headed toward Ōzato while very little of it comes in this direction. Not only that, but ever since the Princess was given in marriage to Tametomo, people have all come to refer to him as ‘son-in-law to the King.’ How can you ignore the fact that his authority is rapidly becoming equal to your excellency’s? I find it mortifying to think that, at this rate, you will end up meeting a horrible death at their hands. Please understand that that is why I have dampened my sleeves.” As she concluded her clever words, Ri Yū heaved a great sigh and said, “You are truly on to something. I’ll immediately appoint Ō Kaku and Ro Roku as commanders and have them besiege the castles at both Ōzato and Kochibira, and then bring me the heads of Tametomo and Shōju. Now to it!” As

² Two rulers described in *Records of the Grand Historian (Shiji)* as unusually cruel.

he was about to leave, Aronia grabbed his sleeve and whispered to him, “Everyone knows of Tametomo’s valor and Shōju’s wisdom, and Ō Kaku and Ro Roku are no match for them. If you attack Ōzato, Kochibira will come to its aid, and if Kochibira is weakened, Ōzato will support it. Then if civil war ensues, Mōun would take advantage to enter the fray and you would have no way to resist two enemy forces. You should just summon Tametomo and Shōju on false pretense, and then command your most powerful warriors to capture and bind them. Then you would take two enemies without fighting a war. Isn’t that so?” Clapping his hand with delight, Ri Yū said, “Indeed, you combine talent and beauty! Your plan is perfect. The Prince turns six this year and so will have the ceremony of wearing his first *hakama*. Tametomo’s and Shōju’s attendance at the event will be expected, so they are sure to fall into my trap. Yest, that’s what I’ll do.” Finally at ease, he summoned Ō Kaku and Ro Roku, informing them of the plot and ordering them, “On such-and-such day this month have all lords assemble here to attend the Prince’s ceremony.”

Having spent those several years with little to do, Tametomo was indignant that he ultimately had no opportunities to perform meritorious service. Princess Shiranui wondered what had become of Sutemaru who, if still alive, would be twelve years old that spring, and though she was possessed of two spirits, allowing her to know of the world beyond the mists of the mountains, yet it was impossible for her to determine whether her son was alive or dead. Because it was her own child, was she wandering on a dark path with no breaks in the clouds?³ Just as Princess Shiranui was expressing such thoughts, a messenger came from Haeburu identifying himself as an officer of the scriptorium and announcing the ceremony. Arranging his attire, Tametomo went out to receive the messenger, who then hurried off toward Kochibira. Late at night, there was a loud knocking at the gate of Ōzato Castle. Before opening, the guards said “We should first inform the lord.” When Tametomo heard of it, he went personally to the peephole to see, and it was Shōju, who had come alone and in secret from Kochibira. Finding it very strange, he invited Shōju inside, personally lit a candle, and showed him to an inner room. Sidling close to him, Shōju said, “An urgent matter has brought me here at this late hour.” Tametomo raised his fan and, looking behind, stopped him. “Keep your voice down!” The water

³ This echoes a frequently cited verse by Fujiwara no Kanesuke (877-933) in the *Gosen wakashū* (no. 1102):

Hito no oya no kokoro wa yami ni aranedomo ko o omou michi ni madoinuru kana

It is not that a parent’s heart is one of darkness,

yet I wander on this path, oblivious to all by my child.

clock in the next room made the sound signaling the hour of the ox [2:00 a.m.]. Why had Shōju come? The reader will find out in the next chapter.

Chapter Fifty-Four

Wounding Aronia, Tametomo sees Mōun,
Slaying Ri Yū, Tsuru and Kame pursue Kumagimi.

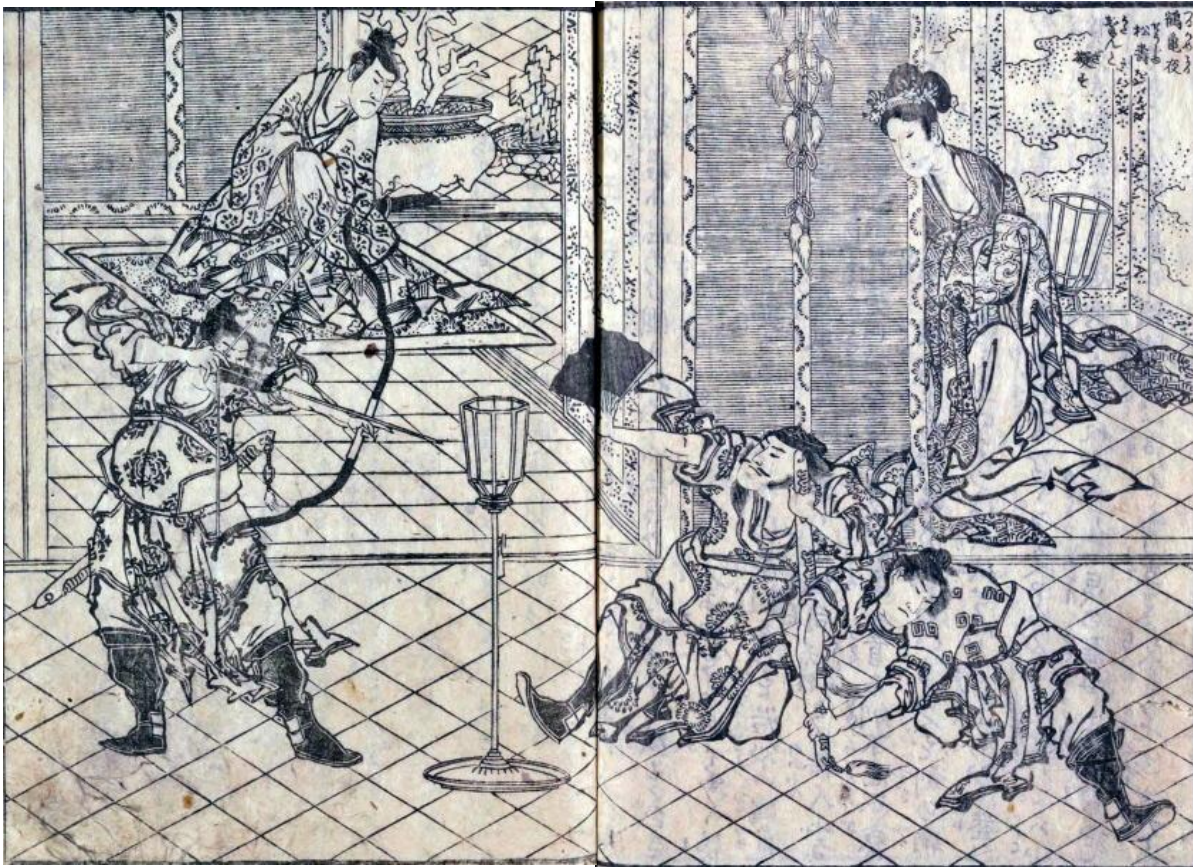
Thinking that something very important must have brought Tō Shōju from Kochibira in such a state of excitement and at such a late hour, Lord Hachirō Tametomo ushered him into a detached room. As they sat facing each other, Shōju dispensed with all conventional greetings and, not hesitating to sidle closer, Leaned toward Tametomo and whispered, “My coming here surreptitiously is simply to inform you that since I had concerns, I had left a spy in Haebaru Castle to keep an eye on situations there. He came running to me after dark and said, ‘There is such-and-such a plot at the castle. They are preparing to use tomorrow’s gathering of lords for the ceremony as an occasion to kill you and Lord Hachirō.’ It seems that Ri Yū is using the young lord as a prop and is issuing commands to the lords, making a display of power and authority as if he were king, and yet he is horribly lacking in wisdom. He is the proverbial monkey wearing a crown.¹ Not only that but for years he has indulged his lust with Aronia, and has taken pleasure in killing innocent people. Thus, Kinmanmon will give him no aid from above, and from below the people will not follow him, for he seems only to want to eat them alive. And so please respond to his scheme with a scheme of your own immediately to serve Ri Yū punishment with death and to save the people from their distress.” Hearing that, Tametomo sighed. “What you say has reason, and yet without receiving a command from the Prince, if I were to take it upon myself to kill the Grand Minister, then I would be guilty of treason. Even if he employs all means to harm me, if I don’t go to the ceremony his scheme will be to no avail. It is best just to plead illness and not go.” Hearing this unexpected response, Shōju again urged him, “To cite examples from both Japanese and Chinese sources, Fujiwara no Kamatari killed Iruka,² and Wang Yun of Han slew Dong Zhuo.³ Neither of them received an imperial command to do so. But their plots were motivated by loyalty to the sovereign and benefit to the country. So even if he is the Grand Minister, should he just be forgiven? When one moves first, one can

¹ From a phrase in the “Xiang Yu benji” chapter of *Records of the Grand Historian (Shiji)*.

² In the so-called Isshi incident, Fujiwara no Kamatari (614-669) killed Soga no Iruka (d. 645) whom he accused of taking bribes.

³ Wang Yun (137-192), who served at court as Minister over the Masses, was alarmed at the rising influence at court of the warlord Dong Zhuo (c. 140-192) and plotted to eliminate him.

suppress a foe, but if one hesitates, then one is suppressed by the foe. Please come to a resolution quickly!” But Tametomo still would not yield.



Tsuru and Kame, who had been eavesdropping on all of this, ran out from behind a screen, exclaiming “Lord Hachirō, don’t become a part of this traitor’s schemes! With your permission, we’ll cut off his head as justice for his treachery, and then after that defeat the insurgents.” With hands on the hilts of their swords they stood on either side of Shōju, ready to strike. Remaining quite complacent, Shōju looked back at them and laughed derisively. “How impertinent of these boys to accuse me of treachery! I have never been guilty of anything. Don’t get carried away and do something foolish.” He had hardly gotten those words out when the brothers shouted in rage, “Our father was your teacher of martial arts, and it was at his recommendation that you were made senior page. But forgetting your debt of gratitude and any sense of righteousness, you attached yourself to power, flattering Ri Yū and killing loyal retainers. That was your first crime. When the Princess and her mother had taken refuge in the Middle Castle, you lured Lady Ren out and mercilessly killed her at a mountain village in Kuba. That was your second crime. The reason why you didn’t work with Sa Kokukitsu to save the

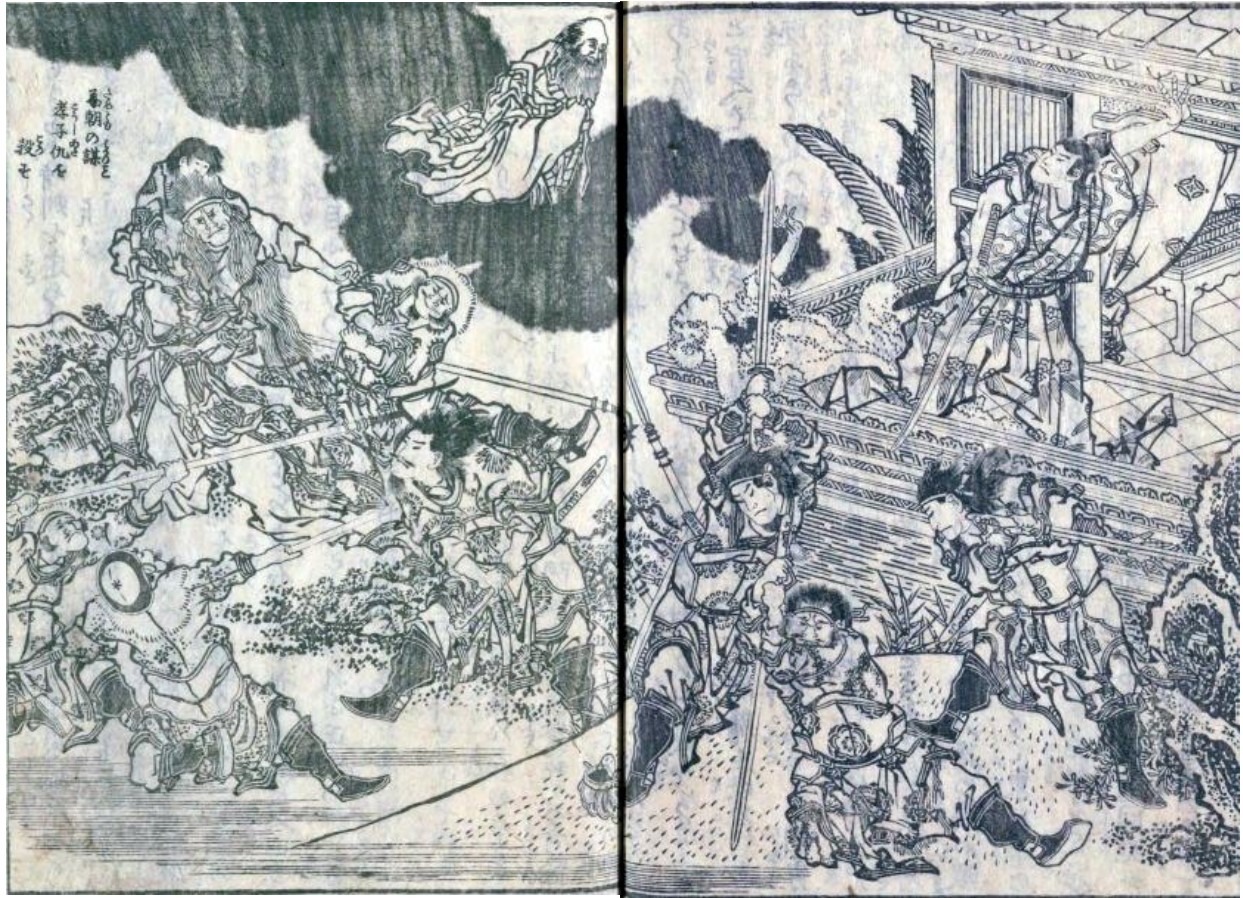
Princess was because you had a treacherous plot in mind, and because of that Sa Kokukitsu lost support and was killed. That was your third crime. Since you have committed these three crimes, who wouldn't call you disloyal and unrighteous? We have been in this castle these many years because of the benevolence and compassion of the Princess and her husband. For a long time now we have gritted our teeth every time we have seen or heard of your flourishing in this world. But as long as Ri Yū, the enemy both of the sovereign and of our father, is still alive, it would upset plans to kill you first and so we just watched from our position in Kakeroma and out of caution made no moves against you. But now you have no way to escape!" They began to draw their swords, but unafraid of the blades, Shōju smiled and said, "Since you don't know the circumstances, it's only reasonable that you should be suspicious. It's painful for me to recall those incidents. I thought that if I had an opportunity I would tell Princess Nei, but since words spread easily I have not yet said anything. Lord Hachirō also ought to hear this. Unworthy though I am, how could I ever harm Lady Ren? Six years have passed as if in a dream. The area around Kuba was thick with Ri Yū's troops, making escape impossible. In order to facilitate the Princess's escape, Lady Ren asked me to take her head as she fell on her own sword, hoping that Ri Yū would then withdraw his troops. After that, when Manazuru was slain on the stone bridge at Koegu, I took her head and presented it to Ri Yū, saying that it was the Princess's. It is impossible to explain briefly how I managed to deceive Ri Yū, adept as he is at intrigues. But when he learned through Lord Hachirō's appeal that the Princess was alive and in Kakeroma, I fell under his suspicion. Though he made a pretense of receiving her out of loyalty, I could tell from the expression on his face that he secretly planned to poison her and to kill me. I thought of various ways I might save Princess Nei as I headed to Kakeroma, but when I had an audience with her, her manner of speaking and even her countenance was unlike her former self. Thus I realized for the first time that it would be easy for her to escape Ri Yū's plot to poison her, and brought her to Haeburu Castle. Thus I was cleared of suspicion. Also, my following Ri Yū these many years was in accordance with my former master Lord Mō's final instructions, and I chose not to die together with Sa Kokukitsu so that I could carry out my ultimate act of loyalty. Many know of Sa Kokukitsu's act of self-sacrifice, but few understand my motives." Then Shōju wiped his tears. Putting their swords back in their sheaths, Tsuru and Kame sighed, no knowing what to say.

Just then, pushing the screen aside the Princess stepped forth and sat down next to Tametomo. Straightening her collar she faced Shōju and said, “Though I had always thought that the Lord of Kochibira was a man of good intentions, yet these many years I have harbored a suspicion that you slew Lady Ren. But tonight, hearing what you whispered to Tsuru and Kame and pondering what has been in your heart, I realize not only your loyalty, but appreciate the compassion of my mother Lady Ren, who took her own life in an attempt to save mine. Truly, were it not for Shōju, not only my life but those of Tsuru and Kame would have ended at Mōun’s and Ri Yū’s hands. Mō Kokutei, Shōju, Sa Kokukitsu, Manazuru, all were loyal retainers and servants, and yet they were oppressed by traitors in an age in which only quislings thrive. When will the tempest besetting this country finally subside?” Then she buried her face in her sleeve. Exchanging glances, the manly spirits of Tsuru and Kame were filled with ever greater vexation, and they were unable to restrain tears. “My husband, I overheard what was said about Ri Yū’s evil plot, and that though you are aware of the danger it poses to you, you are not alarmed by it. It is not a woman’s place to comment on such matters, but the Prince is barely six years old, and even if you were to receive a command from him, it would be in name only and would lack substance, would it not? An ancient man of valor once said ‘Those who would perform feats of great merit cannot concern themselves with minor details of propriety, and those who would observe matters of great decorum do not mind minor mutual concessions.’⁴ You should make up your mind to strike Ri Yū and defeat Mōun in order to save the people.” His arms folded, Tametomo was lost in thought for a while, but then picking up his fan and striking it against his knee, said, “What is you say accords with reason. I am not afraid of Ri Yū. In an age of chaos, people’s hearts conceal daggers under smiles, and they carry poison in their brocade bags. Though I twice rebuffed Shōju’s proposal, as I listen to you I can see that what he says is not disloyal. My doubts have now vanished. To know justice and not carry it out is to lack valor. Shōju, tell me of your plan to strike Ri Yū.” Only too happy to do so, Shōju drew his head close to Tametomo’s and revealed the plan that he had already thought out in detail. In high spirits, Tsuru and Kame said, “In one move, this will avenge our sovereign and our parents as we easily take the heads of Ri Yū and Kumagimi.” Forgetting themselves, they raised their voices and fists. The Princess admonished them, “Not so loud! That could be heard outside.” Since the cock was

⁴ Fan Kuai’s words as recorded in the “Xiang Yu benji” chapter of *Records of the Grand Historian (Shiji)*.

already announcing dawn, Shōju took his leave and hastily withdrew, springing on his horse and returning to Kochibira Castle.

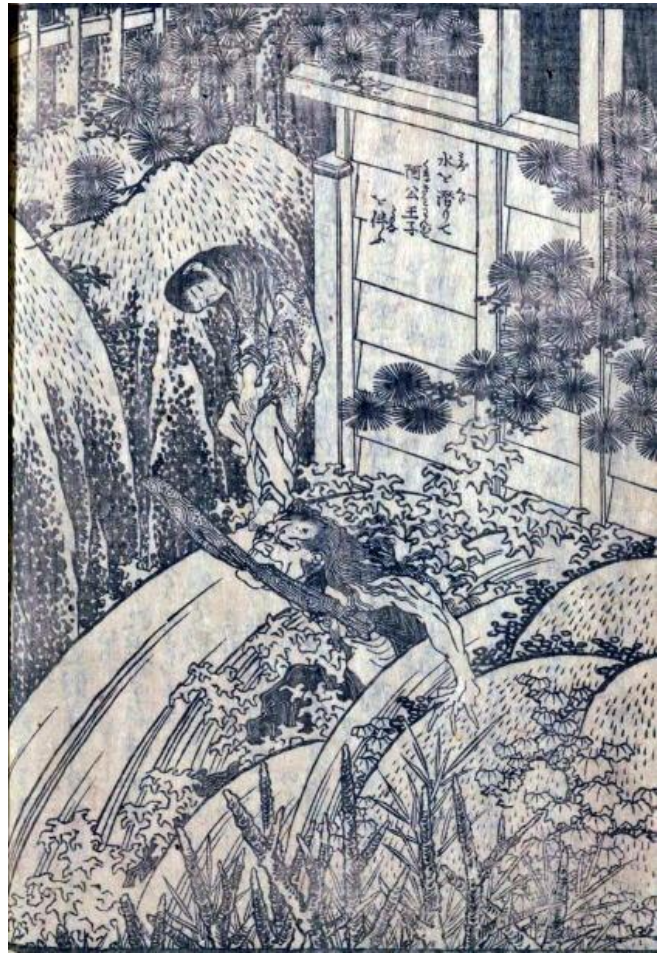
That day arrived, and since plans were already in place, Tametomo dressed himself properly and, as a gift for the Prince, hid Tsuru and Kame in a large basket of flowers born on the shoulders of many laborers. Accompanied by a couple dozen retainers he set out from his castle. Shōju also left Kochibira, and the two companies came together at a determined time. Riding abreast, they hurried along their way, soon arriving at Haeburu Castle. Greeted by Ō Kaku and Ro Roku, they were ushered into the Main Hall, where the flower basket was set on wheels, Tametomo himself taking the rope to pull it. They gradually made their way through the hall with Shōju following from behind. Having passed through the hallway, they came to a room with curtains on both sides, behind which people seemed to be hiding. In the Main Hall a blind was raised revealing a dais on which Kumagimi was seated, holding the Prince in her arms. Ri Yū was seated next to them with the lords in two rows. Then making obeisance to the Prince, Tametomo signaled with his eyes to Shōju, who drew his sword and attacked Ō Kaku, who was standing in front of him, striking him down with one blow. Greatly alarmed, Ri Yū and Kumagimi shouted, “This is an outrage! Men, take them!” Before they could even get the words out, Tsuru and Kame sprang forth from the flower basket, clad in armor and brandishing their swords, vying with each other to cut down Ri Yū. In a state of panic and unable to respond to their attack, he attempted to flee but the brothers closed in on both sides. With any escape route cut off, he drew his sword and parried with them two or three times, but the brothers were filled with filial passion and he could not prevail against them. The first blow was dealt by Tsuru, the second by Kame. Cut across both shoulders, he fell down on his rump. Standing over him, they shouted, “The children of the Lord of the Middle Castle, Mō Kokutei, hereby cleanse their father of false accusation and punish with death the traitor Ri Yū!” Then they cut off his head. At the same moment, with one stroke Tametomo cut down Ro Roku. Attempting to take the Prince, Shōju jumped at Kumagimi, who shouted in panic, “You traitor, Shōju, are you going to kill the Prince?” That made Shōju hesitate, and Kumagimi took advantage of that to pull her sleeve loose from his grasp and run away breathlessly with the Prince in her left arm. Not only Shōju but Tsuru and Kame, determined not to let their mother’s enemy escape, went after her. Then bent on capturing Tametomo and Shōju, the junior pages hiding behind the curtains misunderstood their signal and lost the chance to attack. Being overwhelmed by Tametomo’s display of valor, they all



surrendered. Then everyone, from the high-ranking lords and captains on down to the lowest senior pages kowtowed before him, saying in apology, “We have never entertained any ambitions. We shall swear our loyalty to the Princess and Lord Hachirō. Please spare our lives.” Tametomo did not kill them, but said, “If you are truly sorry for your past wrongs and would do your utmost to show loyalty to the country, then capture Kumagimi and return the Prince safely.” The majority of them departed. Tametomo himself, thinking to capture the lewd woman Aronia, led some junior pages in search of her, and found her leaning against the balustrade of the Scarlet Powder Tower [Kōfunrō], gazing at the flowers in the garden. Looking back at Tametomo, who had let the junior pages up the tower, she smiled derisively and made as if she were about to jump from the balustrade. Fitting an arrow in his bow, Tametomo let it fly. It hit its mark, splitting Aronia’s slender neck open. Strangely enough, a dark smoke issued from the wound, and inside the smoke suddenly appeared the image of an old wizard, laughing at them. The voice became vague, then faded away along with the image. Leaning on his bow, Tametomo glared at the scene and said, “Well then, just like the beast of misfortune, Aronia was none other than one

of Mōun's illusions. This sorcery cost many innocent people their lives." Everyone present shuddered with fear.

In the meantime, Tō Shōju had dashed out into the courtyard in pursuit of Kumagimi, but hindered by thick growth of trees the chase did not go as he wished. Kumagimi was old but nimble on her feet, and with the Prince in her arms she scurried away like a weasel, weaving her way through the trees. Soon having lost sight of her, Shōju grew all the more fretful as he fought his way through the dense growth. At the same time, Tsuru and Kame, having finished off their enemy Ri Yū, were determined not to let the detested Kumagimi get away. But like an undammed stream of water she slipped away, much to the chagrin of the brothers. Running outside the earthen wall, they heard a splash in the ditch from the castle sluice and saw the figure of



someone drawing a child up out of the water. Seeing that it must be Kumagimi, Tsuru hid among the trees on the bank while Kame lay in wait for her. Unaware of his presence, she straightened her disheveled white hair and, wringing the water out of her robe, said, "That's a good boy. Don't cry. Let me hold you." Then, still dripping wet and with the child against her bosom, she climbed up the bank holding on to bamboo grass, but was surprised to see the glint of Kame's blade. She deftly jumped over him, at the same time dealing a strong blow to his side, causing him to stagger. Seeing this, Tsuru shouted, "Kumagimi, you think you're going to get away?" Looking back at him, she threw a blade at him which he caught with the hilt of his sword. She jumped into the thick growth of reeds at the water's edge, disappearing into the darkness.

Chapter Fifty-Five

Assembling the lords, Tametomo strikes Mōun,
Abandoning the castles, the traitorous commanders rush to the capital.

Having slain Aronia, Tametomo descended from the tower to find that Shōju, Tsuru, Kame, and all of the lords and captains had returned. “We have pursued Kumagimi in every direction, but she made off carrying the Prince, escaping by the castle sluice. We have no idea where she is.” Tametomo knitted his brows and said, “Kumagimi is just an avaricious, shameless old woman. It doesn’t much matter if she gets away. But what happens to the Prince is a major cause of concern. If Kumagimi runs to enemy territory and is captured by Mōun’s rebel troops and the Prince is put in a dangerous situation, then whose name would we invoke to raise an army of loyalists? That is what causes me great consternation. Divide up into parties and once again go look for the Prince. And be quick about it!” Then they answered, “Please don’t trouble yourself too much about that. The Prince was said to have been born by the queen, but actually his lineage is uncertain. You are son-in-law to the former King and husband to Princess Nei. Even without the Prince, who could say that you lack the authority to lead a strike against Mōun? Thus, we do not lament the loss of the Prince; we would only lament not being able to destroy Mōun. First of all, take all of the riches Ri Yū extorted from the people and distribute it back to them to ease their suffering. And after Sannan Province is well governed again, then destroy Mōun. This is what we desire.” They remonstrated in all sincerity, and unable to counter their arguments, Tametomo followed their council for the time being. He went through the castle, freeing all innocent prisoners and opened up the treasury, distributing funds to officials, soldiers, and civilians. Also, the families of those innocent people whom Ri Yū put to death received special allowances. All were deeply grateful for his show of compassion and were as happy as parched stalks of rice receiving rain or a carp in a rut puddle being returned to deep water,¹ and they felt that they would gladly give their lives for such a ruler. They wanted him to destroy Mōun quickly, and were prepared to make any sacrifice to that end. Tametomo continued to abrogate Ri Yū’s harsh laws and rectify rewards and punishments. He made Tsuru commander of forces and Kame assistant to his brother, putting them in charge of Haebaru Castle and having them

¹ This simile appears in the “Wai wu” chapter of *Zhuangzi*.

continue their search for the Prince. He sent Shōju back to Kochibira and then returned to Ōzato the next day, where he reported to the Princess all that had happened. She listened closely, and was pleased to hear of the end of Ri Yū and his line, but was distressed to hear that the whereabouts of the Prince was still unknown. Thus Tametomo had searches conducted in each *magiri* and even sent spies to the capital to try to determine where Kumagimi had gone, but the days passed in vain and the year finally came to an end with no information about the Prince. Spring arrived, and in the third month a petition arrived from Haebaru and Kochibira, signed by Shōju, Tsuru, and Kame, urging “The forces are all ready and the lords are all in agreement: let us attack Mōun.” But Tametomo replied, “It is still too soon,” and would make no moves.

The Princess did not find the situation worth comment. Time passed and it was already the end of the ninth month. Tametomo announced the convening of a military council, gathering all lords at Ōzato Castle. Tō Shōju from Kochibira, Tsuru and Kame from Haebaru, Gikan from Koroku, Denbei from Mount Yae and others were all in attendance. With his fan as a scepter, Tametomo said, “I unexpectedly came to this land as a castaway. I found it in a state of chaos, but have come to be called son-in-law to the King, have assumed important responsibilities, have been favored by the respect of the lords, and have spent my days in peace. Yet I have sought none of this. Mōun assassinated the former King, took control of the palace, and has long exercised illegitimate rule. What is particularly regrettable is that Ri Yū showed no devotion to the cause of the country. Only briefly did he show any valor, soon indulging in wine and women and making no effort to strike the enemy. He killed innocent soldiers and civilians, and even plotted to destroy Lord Tō and me, and so last year we had no choice but to punish him with death. And yet the Prince was spirited away by Kumagimi, and without him I have refrained from pressing all of you to raise an army. It is not that I fear Mōun’s sorcery; rather, unless the Prince is returned to Haebaru, people will say that I killed the Grand Minister and evicted the Prince to suit my own selfish interests and to take control of Sannan Province. This has weighed heavily on me, and so I have searched everywhere, even into enemy territory, but have found no clue of the Prince’s fate. The months and days are flowing like a stream. Both time and vigor are easy things to lose. Few live to seventy, and if I die—and then all of you die—who would be left to destroy Mōun? This is not a time to dither. Even if we don’t know the whereabouts of the Prince, for the sake of the former King we should raise a righteous army and determine whether this land will be at peace or remain in danger. Now though the Princess is my wife, she is also

the eldest daughter and heir of King Shō Nei, and so on this day we shall determine that she is ruler. She is behind that blind over there.” He pointed with his fan, and all present replied, “Quite right!” From behind the blind came the Princess’s voice, “Since I know nothing of these matters, I have nothing to say. I am terribly sorry.” Then turning to Shōju, Tametomo said, “Lord Tō, you have knowledge of tactics, and I hear that you are quite familiar with the terrain. It would be advantageous for us to advance north next to the palace, but the path through the mountains is very steep, making troop movement difficult. If you have some idea, let us hear it.” Shōju came forward and said, “Since the palace is not far from here, it is no doubt heavily fortified. Not only that, but the road to it winds through the mountains, impeding movement of troops. If we were to mount a direct attack from here, we would sustain heavy casualties, and would expend great effort for no real gain. In my humble opinion, we should leave a wise and valiant commander in Ōzato while you yourself lead the lords, secretly crossing the Naga River then making your way around the foot of Bengatake to make a rapid attack on Urazoi Castle. Then we could invade the area of Ginowa and Miri, after which we could attack the palace from the north. Mōun would come out himself and fight the battle. At that time, the commander left at Ōzato could lead two or three hundred stalwart soldiers into the mountains, from which they could rapidly attack the enemy from the rear. Then facing an assault from both front and back, even Mōun’s sorcery would be of no use to him, and he would soon be taken.” Everyone was deeply impressed with Shōju’s eloquent description of his plan, calling it a marvelous strategy. Tametomo decided to follow it, but asked, “Whom should we leave here to attack the enemy from the rear?” Shōju again spoke up. “Tsuru and Kame are young, but they possess the wisdom and courage of their father, Mō Kokutei. There would be no better choice than these brothers.” Tsuru and Kame were not pleased to hear that, and muttered, “Mōun is the enemy of both the sovereign and our father. We do not wish to be even a moment late to the subduing of the rebels.” Tametomo looked back at them and laughed. “Whether one advances or retreats, if it is done out of loyal devotion, who should be afraid of it? And yet it is the way of a brave warrior to be pleased to advance but dislike retreat. I had previously thought of putting these brothers in the vanguard, so we should choose someone else. Through the spirit of my former wife, Shiranui, the Princess is endowed with tactical wisdom and strength of courage, second to no man. Could anyone command greater respect from soldiers? Therefore we should make her commander of the forces to attack from the rear. There may be those who will mock, saying that I was unable to raise an army and had to

appoint a woman as commander, but anciently the wife of Katana, the lord of Kamitsuke, led a few dozen women into battle to subdue the eastern barbarians,² and in China Lady Xian was leader of three armies, achieving victory at Baiyue.³ If she is able to perform meritoriously, a woman should be appointed. What does everyone think?” Shōju and the other lords said, “If the Princess commands the rear guard, then you would be attacking from the north toward the south, and she from the south toward the north, a union of *yin* and *yang*,⁴ pointing to victory.” Hearing their response, the Princess was overjoyed, and waited impatiently while Tametomo rehearsed the strategy to her and appointed her commander of the rear guard. Since Gikan, Lord of Koroku, and Denbei, chief official from Mount Yae, were already in their fifties and were very prudent, he left them under the Princess’s command. He put Tsuru and Kame in the vanguard, assigning Shōju as strategist, while he personally led the middle troops. He divided one thousand three hundred troops into two division, with three hundred of them under the princess’s command to form the rear guard. Shortly the military council was concluded with all in order. According to the Japanese reckoning, it was dawn on the twenty-eighth day of the ninth month of Juei 1 [1182] during the reign of Emperor Antoku.⁵ At the head of one thousand soldiers Tametomo set out from Ōzato. The first day they camped in Sajiki (the name of a *magiri*) where they were joined by more troops. Finally crossing the Naga River, they circled around the base of Bengatake, rapidly approaching the castle at Urazoi to attack it.

Prior to that time, Mōun had summoned Tō Son, Ki Risshi, and Zen Kō, graphically describing to them how Ri Yū had been slain, and adding, “Just as I had thought, Ri Yū has already been killed and the ten *magiri* of Sannan Province are completely under Tametomo’s control. But being prudent, Tametomo will not carelessly attack this place, because on the day when Ri Yū was slain, Kumagimi escaped with the Prince, and Tametomo doesn’t know where they are. That’s one thing. Last year’s harvest was meager, leaving the soldiers from Sannan poorly provisioned. That’s a second thing. As I consult astrology, I see that Tametomo’s fate is not yet close to expiring, so there is nothing to be gained from attacking him now. I think that he

² The *Nihon shoki* records that during the reign of Emperor Jomei (593-641; r. 629-641), Katana fought the eastern barbarians but his men fled and he was defeated. Then his wife got him drunk, took his sword and armor, and led a group of women into victorious battle.

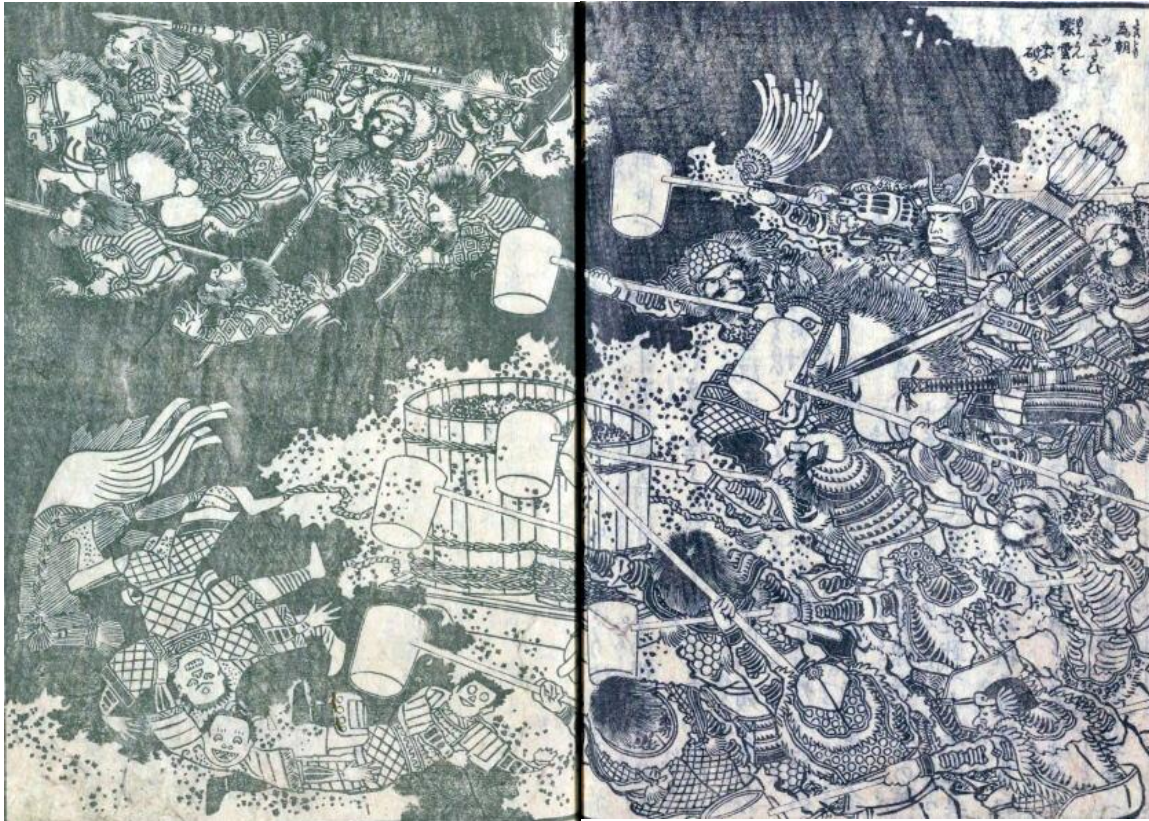
³ Lady Xian (522-602), also known as Lady of Qiao Guo, was a noblewoman of the Li people who also had a reputation as a military commander.

⁴ In addition to a union of male and female, the north is associated with *yin*, the south with *yang*.

⁵ 1178-1185; r. 1183-1185.

will wait until the autumn harvest is in before he decides to attack the palace. You must understand that.” At the end of the ninth month, Mōun again summoned Tō Son and Zen Kō, saying “Just as I explained to you previously, Tametomo has already convened a military council, and will attack either today or tomorrow. He is not at all like Ri Yū. With the help of Tō Shōju he has planned carefully. He has appointed the Princess as commander of the rear guard to cross over the mountain road from Ōzato and take us by surprise from behind. However, nothing escapes my all-seeing eye, and so there is nothing to fear. Tō Son, you go quickly to Urazoi. Ki Risshi, you guard Ginowa. And Zen Kō, you take five hundred soldiers to the port of Naha and surround the bay. Then attack the fortress at Koroku and proceed to Haeburu Castle. Then when you see Shimabukuro on fire, divide into two companies and attack the castles at Kochibira and Ōzato, taking the Princess and her forces from behind, so that with one battle you can take her prisoner. Tō Son and Ki Risshi, you engage Tametomo in battle, then pretending to be exhausted abandon the castle at Urazoi and lure them here. I have a strategy for them after that.” Everyone cheerfully accepted the plan, saying “Our Holy Sovereign has devised an ingenious plan! We’ll be sure to take Tametomo and the Princess captive.” Then they immediately set out.

At that time, with Tsuru and Kame on the front line, Tametomo was attacking Urazoi Castle, which was defended by the general and member of the Council of Three Tō Son and several hundred soldiers. Engaging with them in battle about a half mile from the castle, Tsuru and Kame charged directly into the fray, parrying with Tō Son. Attacked from both sides, he was unable to put up a resistance and escaped, hiding behind horses. Seeing the rebel forces in disarray, Tametomo advanced, moving forward like the surging tide, blocking their escape routes. Tō Son made no attempt to enter the castle, but as had been planned in advance, headed toward the palace in defeat. Tametomo then easily took Urazoi Castle. Before attacking Ginowa they camped that night by the Kushi River to allow soldiers and horses to rest. At the crack of dawn he sent scouts to reconnoiter enemy positions. They returned and reported, “Ki Risshi, commander of rebel forces in Ginowa, must have been frightened by the fall of Urazoi Castle. During the night he abandoned the castle and has retreated.” Hearing that, Tametomo replied laughing, “Those rebel forces are as useless as a congregation of crows. Just hearing of our martial courage they run away without fighting. Well, that could only be expected. How many leagues is the palace from here?” Tsuru and Kame stepped forward. “The palace is not far from here. Turtle Mountain lies to the southwest of Ginowa, and it is part of the palace’s territory. At



the foot of Turtle Mountain is Sueyoshi, and to the south of it is West Giho. Everything north of Shue Village is called Giho. When you cross Giho you come to Akahira. Mount Sekiko is in Akahira. All of these are due north of the palace. If you take Mount Sekiko, it will be easy to attack the palace.” Pleased to hear this, Tametomo divided his troops into three companies and soon entered Turtle Mountain, when Shōju remonstrated with him, saying, “Mōun is like Zhang Jue of the Han dynasty,⁶ and his powers of sorcery are unfathomable. There must be some plot behind Tō Son’s and Ki Risshi’s abandoning their castles and fleeing. Shouldn’t more thought be given to our next move?” Tametomo nodded and said, “That has occurred to me also. With his sorcery he could conjure up illusions of monsters, but the illusions can immediately be destroyed by the blood of beasts or by a flood of excrement. In anticipation of this, I have prepared many buckets of animal blood, excrement, and other filthy things and have those stored in our camp. Our vanguard troops have prepared ladles attached to long poles, and if they encounter such sorcery from Mōun’s side, they will quickly dump the filth on it and break its power.” The brothers agreed to this plan and vigorously advanced across Turtle Mountain, attacking Sueyoshi.

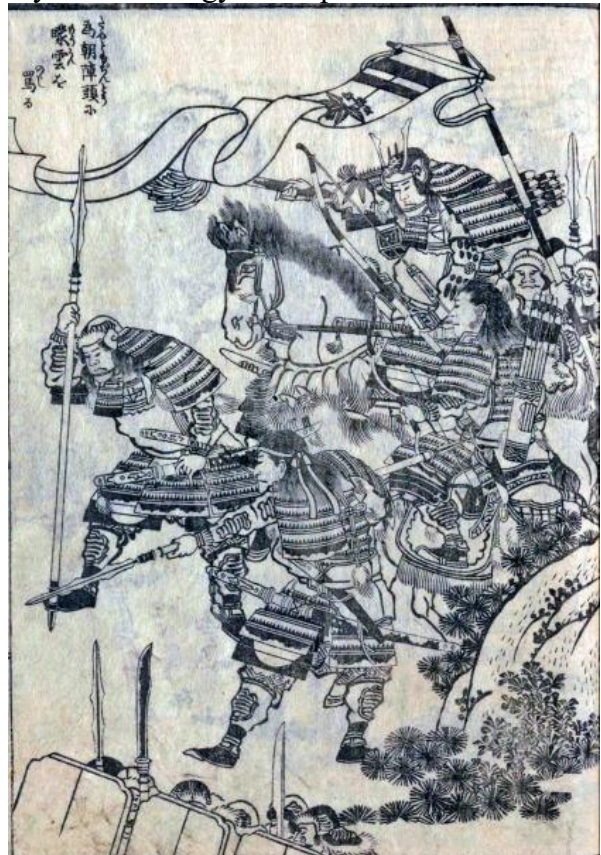
⁶ Zhang Jue (sometimes read Zhang Jiao, d. 184) was leader of the Yellow Turban Rebellion, and claimed to have supernatural powers.

Tō Son and Ki Risshi combined their forces and fought, but soon retreated with Tsuru and Kame in hot pursuit. Both rebel commanders were so overpowered that they were not even able to get fresh mounts at Giho, and abandoning even Akahira, they fled into the palace.

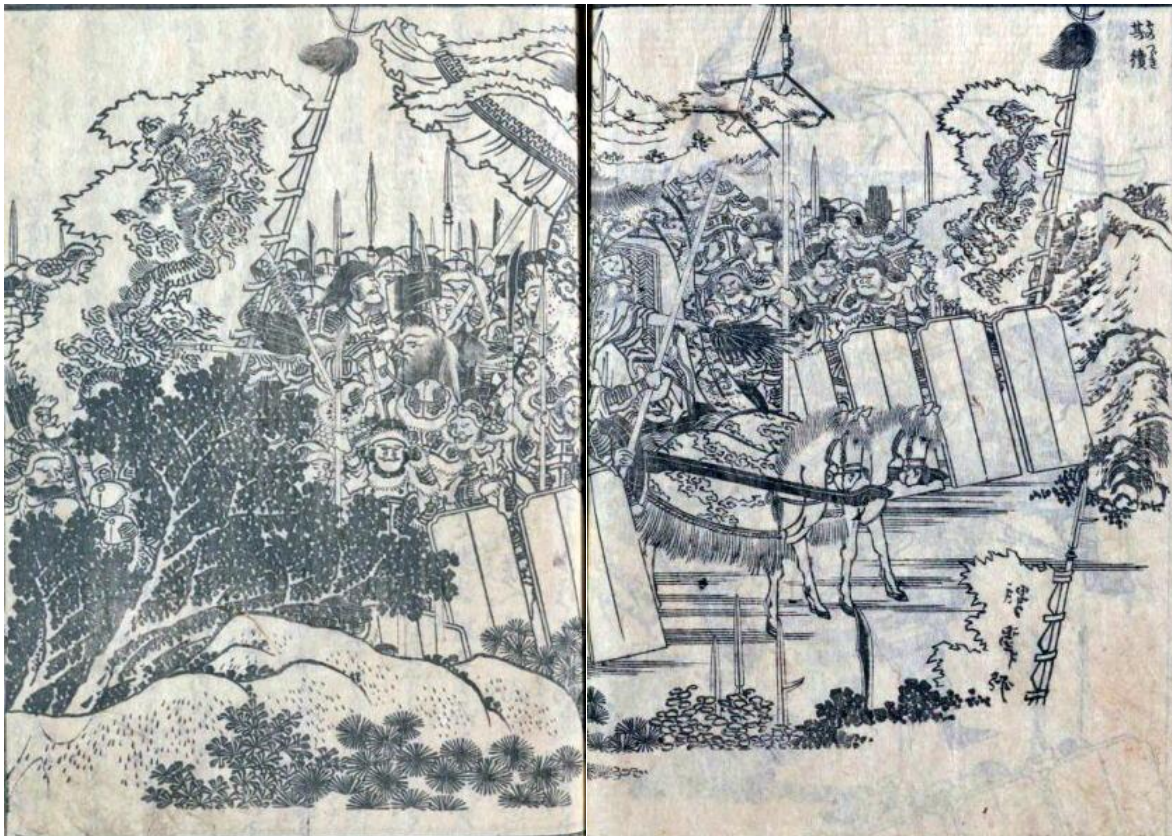
Chapter Fifty-Six

Closing in on Shimabukuro, Mōun burns Tametomo,
Removing smoldering debris, the Princess searches for her husband.

With his military prowess Tametomo set all of Chūzan Province in motion, charging ahead and pursuing all who fled. He easily took Mount Sekiko, turning it into a stronghold, and had scouts reconnoiter the palace in preparation to attack it. They returned and reported, “Mōun himself has led several hundred troops to Kane Castle.” Pleased to hear this, Tametomo turned to Shōju and said, “Looking over maps recently, I see that Kane Castle lies to the southwest of the palace, and Ōzato is behind it. If I now attack it from the front and the Princess makes an assault from the rear we’ll be certain to take Mōun captive in one operation. Let’s be quick about it!” Then as he was about to whip his horse into action, Shōju again remonstrated with him, “Mōun can perceive people’s thoughts, and has the ability to see things within a thousand leagues. You should camp here for a while. First order Tsuru and Kame to strike and test their mettle.” But Tametomo shook his head. “Tsuru and Kame are still young, and are no match for Mōun. If I myself do not attack, then the whole plan will go awry. Your strategy is too passive. I’ve had an idea from the start.” No sooner had he answered than he whipped his horse and rushed off. The morale of the soldiers was greater than usual and they followed him, determined not to be left behind. Now Kane Castle was on a broad plain, about half a mile in either direction, making it easy to maneuver horses. To the east was Mount Saki, and to the north was Naga River. The area was next to Sannan Province, not far from Ōzato. For generations this area had been used by the kings for recreation. On the left was Kinjō Bridge, and on the right was the Suigan Pavilion. Tametomo was already looking fixedly at the head of Mōun’s army stationed directly in front of him, a force of four or five hundred. They

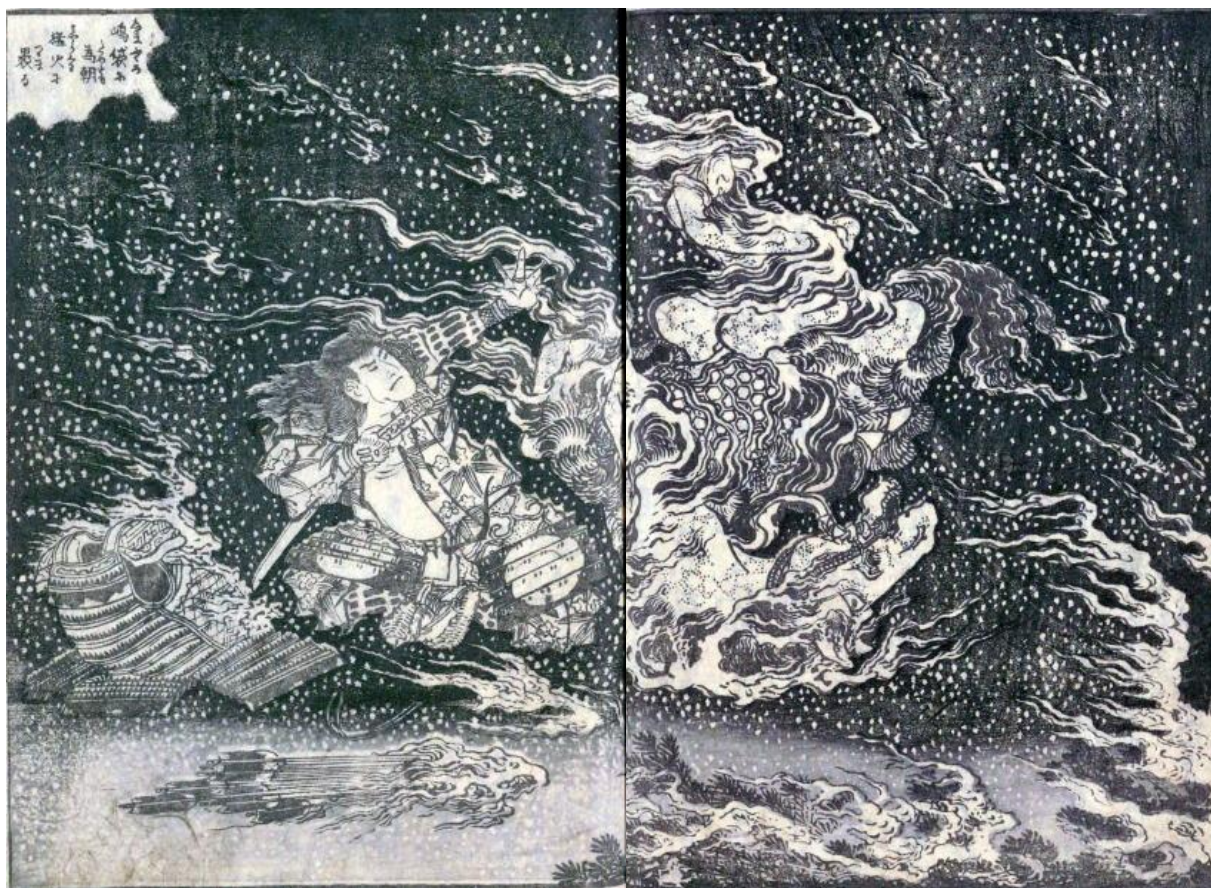


soon divided into two companies and out came a cart with an enormous yellow awning fluttering in the autumn wind. Tō Son was on its left and Ki Risshi on its right. The rebel commander Mōun was in the carriage, a kerchief with a comet design on his head and a robe of snake skin around his body. A surplice of bamboo cloth was draped over his shoulder, and in his hand was a feather fan. Then both armies began to beat their battle drums and raised war cries. With Tsuru and Kame on either side, Tametomo raced his horse forward. That day he was wearing armor over a court robe dyed deep scarlet, tied with purple armor straps, all heavy and leaving no inch exposed. On his head was a helmet with a silver star, five neck plates, and engravings of sun and moon in gold and silver. In a golden sheath he carried the famous sword Unomaru, given to his father Lord Tameyoshi by the New Cloistered Emperor at the battle of Hōgen, as well as another sword three-and-a-half feet long at his waist. He also carried thirty-six arrows fletched with falcon feathers, and a bow whose thick grip was bound with wisteria vines. On his intrepid pale yellow black-maned steed was a saddle with polished metal fixtures bearing the insignia of the Seiwa Genji, all decorated with thick tassels. He stood beneath a white banner, cutting a bold figure of gallantry that people of this land were unaccustomed to seeing, and both friend and foe alike could not help being impressed.



Then standing in his stirrups and leaning into the horn of his saddle, Tametomo glared at Mōun and reviled him in a loud voice. “You cur of an evil monk! With your sorcery you assassinated King Shō Nei. How long are you going to wreak havoc in the palace? Who does not despise your atrocities? If you have heard of my reputation for martial valor, I’ll show you an example of it. I am a direct descendant of the Japanese Emperor Seiwa, Hachirō Tametomo. I have unexpectedly formed a union with the Princess, and last year punished the traitorous Ri Yū with death. And this year I have raised a righteous army to strike you and save the people of the three provinces from their distress. If you feel even the slightest contrition, then you will realize that Heaven’s punishment is inevitable and will submit to our swords.” Mōun guffawed and said, “You’re nothing but a vagrant from an eastern land who has nowhere else to go and has drifted here, forming an illicit union with the Princess and calling yourself son-in-law to the King. Taking advantage of your power you killed the Grand Minister, and in pursuit of the Prince you have taken control of Sannan Province. Your evil intent exceeds that of tigers and wolves. I had thought of sending a few soldiers to take you captive, but affairs of government have left me no time and I have let you go these many years. But now you’ve come to me, like a moth drawn to a flame. Who will go strike this wretch?” Both Tō Son and Ki Risshi responded to the command, “We’ll go!” Both whipped their horses and advanced. Remaining cool and composed, Tametomo was about to take them on when Tsuru and Kame suddenly advanced, crossing their spears with the rebel commanders, who were soon exhausted and retreated. Seeing how few the enemy were in numbers and how easily they could be crushed, Tsuru and Kame felt ever bolder and, habitually eager for victory, pursued them. Showing no sign of consternation, Mōun pointed to the sky and a black cloud descended. Inside the cloud were men and horses of strange appearance, charging toward Tametomo’s forces and engaging them in battle. At Shōju’s command, the vats of filth and the long-handled ladles were brought out and the muck was poured on the attackers. Mōun’s army fell to the ground. Looking at them closely, the soldiers were blue paper cut-outs, and the horses were made of twisted straw. Then Tametomo issued the command, “Now we see the true colors of that rebel Mōun. Hurry and take him captive!” Pounding their quivers the soldiers raised a battle cry, and vying to be ahead, all rushed forth. Just at that moment Mōun’s rear guard fell into disarray and so, having no way to conjure more illusions, he turned his cart around and was hastily trying to flee. Seeing this, Tametomo said, “The confusion in the rebels’ rear guard must mean that the Princess’s forces are attacking from

behind. Quickly cut off their escape route from the northeast and don't let them into the castle!" Waving his battle staff he raced ahead of his troops toward Mōun's cart. Not knowing what to do and unable to enter the palace, the rebel forces fled toward the Naga River. Tametomo went after them in hot pursuit, shouting "Come back, cowards!" Feeling apprehensive, Shōju yelled at the top of his voice, "Mōun surely has some trick up his sleeve. Please hold off for a while." But Tametomo paid him no heed. When he reached the dense forest on the border between Chūzan and Sannan, he suddenly lost sight of Mōun. Tametomo's troops became confused, uncertain which direction they should go. As they were dithering, thick clouds suddenly arose. Though the sun was high in the sky, it became darker than at midnight. Tametomo did not know where his soldiers were, nor could they see him. A fierce wind also began to blow, rumbling from the mountains, toppling trees, and throwing sand in their faces. This was unbearable. Then on all sides rebel soldiers began shouting "Don't let Tametomo get away!" Arrows were flying like rain. His troops that had been so valiant until now were scared out of their wits, some struck by stray arrows, some stumbling over tree stumps, some wounded by their own weapons. It was uncertain how many had perished. Shōju, Tsuru, and Kame had distanced themselves from the rebel forces, and Tametomo was left alone. But his sturdy armor protected him from arrows and fortunately his horse also remained unharmed. Though he did not know what it was, he could see a light several hundred yards away. Feeling somewhat revived, he hurried toward the light and arrived only to find that it was not a dwelling but rather a lantern high up in the trees of the forest. Since it was a perpetually warm country, the leaves never dry up and the grasses grow tall and thick. He thought at first that it might be an ancient shrine, but there was no such thing. Wondering where this might be, he glanced about in the dim lamplight and saw a signboard beneath a tree bearing the characters "Shimabukuro," and beneath that in small red characters: "Tametomo will come here and die." He was surprised to read that, thinking to himself "This place is part of Sannan Province and is not far from Ōzato. Since it's surrounded by tall mountains, the only outlet is to the east, and that's why it's called 'Shimabukuro' [island cul-de-sac]. I was lost in the dark and ended up running here, but if the enemy has sealed off the outlet, how could I escape? I'm in a dangerous spot." He tugged on the bit to turn his horse around and

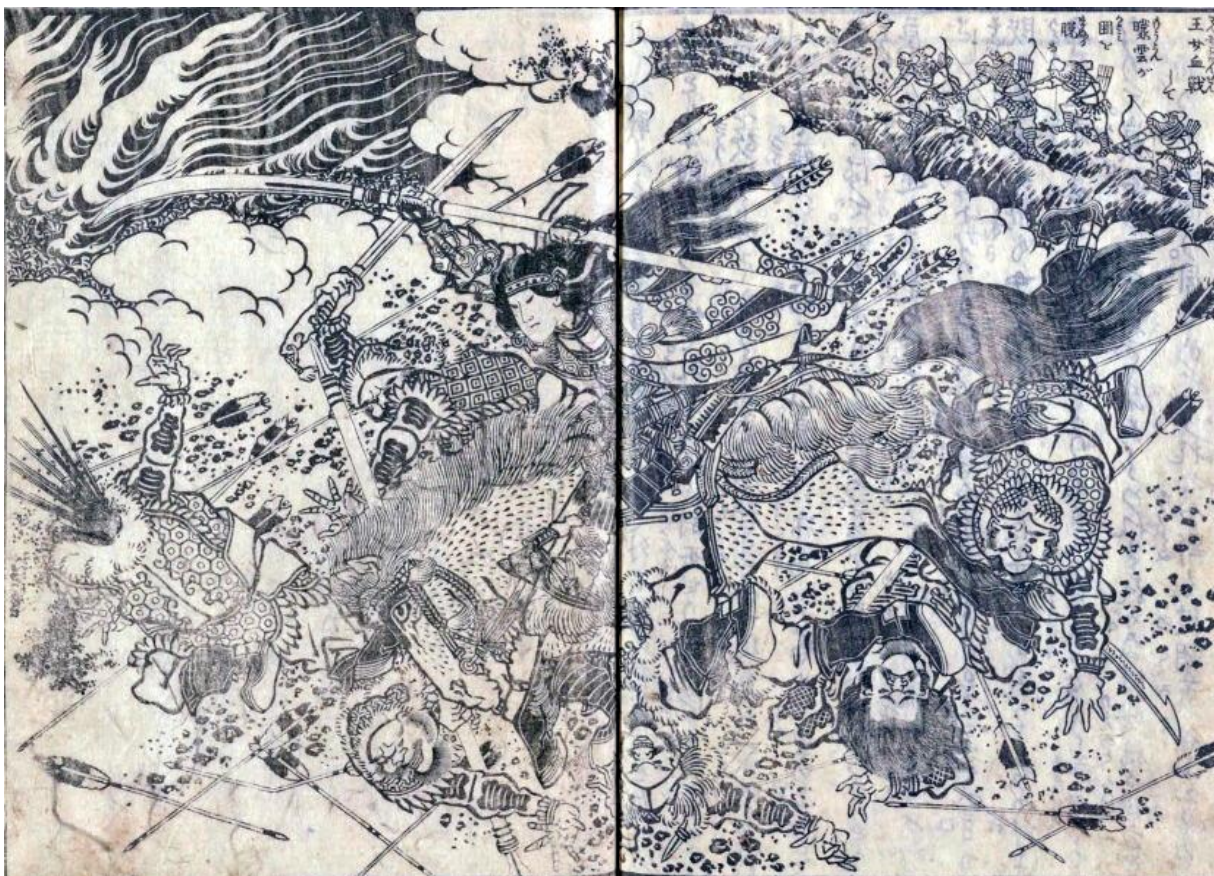


head out. Mōun had planned for that and had blocked the outlet with massive amounts of brushwood. In ever greater consternation Tametomo jumped off his horse and tried to clear away the brushwood that was piled high like a mountain when strangely enough the lantern fell into the brushwood, spreading its flame in all directions. Like the flight of fireflies the flames jumped onto the branches of trees and into the grass. The brushwood was now an inferno, fanned by the wild winds from the mountains. With flames on all sides, the horse panicked and ran about furiously. Its tail caught on fire and, choking in the smoke, finally fell. Accustomed to warfare on land and sea, as a military commander Tametomo could face down a horde of enemies, but was helpless when it came to escaping fire. For a while he tried using his bow to clear away things that were ablaze, but not being made of metal or stone, the feathered ends of his arrows, his armor straps, and even the sleeves of his robe were soon all burned off as he stood in the conflagration. His situation was just like that faced by Yamato Takeru in Suruga.¹ But unlike

¹ The *Nihon shoki* records that Yamato Takeru (c. 72-114), son of Emperor Keikō (13-130; r. 71-130), on a campaign to subdue the eastern barbarians, encountered some brigands in Suruga who, pretending to invite him to hunt, set the plain on fire intending to kill him. Takeru cut away the burning grass with the miraculous sword Kusanagi and escaped.

Takeru, the winds were not in his favor. Drawing his sword Unomaru he cut his sash and discarded his armor. He looked up at the heavens and sighed, then shouted “Has my time come? Has my life run its course? Ever since the Hōgen disturbance I have cheated death many times and escaped, but now I’ve drifted to this land and, facing the flames produced by the sorcery of an evil wizard I’ll end up losing my martial reputation in a foreign land. What a bitter end!” His voice resounded in the smoke. It seemed that now was the end.

About that same time the Princess, having gone through the mountain path from Ōzato, was about to attack Mōun from the rear. She first sent spies to learn of the conditions of the battle, and they came running back to report, “Each time Lord Hachirō’s army goes into battle it always wins. They’ve taken the castles at Urazoi and Minowa, and have made their way as far as Akahira.” “In that case, let us make haste,” she responded and, leaving a hundred soldiers to defend Ōzato Castle, was secretly leading two hundred troops under Gikan and Denbei over the two leagues of mountain path when suddenly everything became dark, and from the direction of Shimabukuro a great conflagration broke out. Stopping her horse and looking out over the scene, the Princess was deeply suspicious, asking “What is going on there?” Just then several soldiers who had been left to guard Ōzato Castle came running up breathlessly and spattered with blood. “Mōun’s commander, Intelligence Officer Zen Kō appeared with four or five hundred soldiers as if out of nowhere. Seeing that you had left the castle, they attacked ferociously. Since the forces remaining in the castle were few in number, though they fought with all their might they could not withstand the assault, and all were massacred. We have run here to report. Along the way we heard that the fortresses of Koroku, Haeburu, and Kochibira have also fallen to the enemy.” Stupefied by the news, Denbei and Gikan could only stammer “How could that happen?” The soldiers all looked at each other in amazement. At that moment, perhaps having taken a shortcut, Mōun’s commander Tō Son suddenly appeared on the opposite mountain peak at the head of several hundred soldiers and shouted, “Don’t you know? By the banks of the Naga River a thousand of Tametomo’s troops have been slain, and he ended up wandering into Shimabukuro where he has no doubt been reduced to ashes in the roaring inferno there. Princess Nei, if you value your life come forth and surrender.” His voice echoed several times through the valley. Then he and his troops charged straight down the mountain, and the Princess likewise charged, shouting, “You insolent rat! I’ll show you that Princess Nei shares the same thunderous martial reputation with her husband. Don’t you know of Princess Shiranui? If you look down on me as a



woman, I'll show you a thing or two." Then twirling her pole sword like a water mill she tormented the approaching enemy, cutting them down. The rebel soldiers in the vanguard hid behind trees here or boulders there. Arrows were flying like locusts, but even that was not able to stop her. From the rear the rebel commander Zen Kō, having taken Ōzato Castle and now determined to capture the Princess, led a large number of soldiers shouting battle cries. Her own troops, cringing and losing morale, were unable to find an escape route and an untold number of them were killed. Gikan and Denbei, attempting to protect the Princess, parted with Gikan facing Tō Son's arrows and Denbei blocking Zen Kō's advance, withstanding them for as long as they were able, but having lost all support from their own men, both were shot and perished in the confusion of the battle. The Princess was able to cut through those surrounding her and advance, only to have more assailants pursue her. She would again cut through with her pole sword and when the enemy retreated would rush forward on her horse. In this manner she traversed the two leagues of mountain path until dusk, constantly pursued by rebel forces. Even if she were fated to lose her life, she was determined to see what had happened to her husband. Her horse having been taken down by a stray arrow, she continued on foot, running toward Shimabukuro. It was

already dark and the enemy troops were far behind. It was past the hour of the rat [1:00 a.m.] when she finally arrived in Shimabukuro. She wondered if this indeed was the place. The vegetation had all turned to ash and only boulders were visible here and there. Some tree stumps were still moldering, and the whole horrifying scene lay in thick smoke. There was no soaking rain as there had been in Gourd Valley,² only what seemed like the panting of Tian Dan's flaming oxen.³ Wondering with an aching heart if the remains of her husband might be here, she searched using her pole sword to dig among charred trees. She found the corpse of his horse, its mane and tail singed away, wretchedly lying on the ground and said to herself, "His horse has ended up like this, so how could its master have survived? His armor and metal fixtures remain, but did the enemy come and take away his bones? Well then, since I was not able to attend his last moments, I shall show my devotion to him by going up in the same smoke. Truly, he was born as the young master of a prominent Japanese family of imperial lineage, but fate was against him and he was not able to remain in his native land. He drifted to this country and, in order to quell the chaos, destroyed a traitorous minister and then began a righteous war. With the gods taking pity on him, he should have succeeded, but many things in the world seem to be turned on their head and his efforts were to no avail. He fell victim to the plot of the traitorous sorcerer and has been burned in the conflagration. The fortunes of war cannot be predicted. I recall that time seven years ago, likewise in the tenth month when at Shimakita on Little Ryukyu he saved my life, but now I am not able to save him. But like a pheasant on a burned over field seeking its mate, there is no use to making a sound." By this time she was speaking at the top of her voice. The mind of this wise wife and brave woman who could get the better of men was in a state of confusion as tears spilled over her face. Intending to return to the underworld, she gathered limbs from still burning trees and was about to jump into the flame that came burning forth from them when from within the belly of the dead horse came a voice, "Hey, wait!" Then Tametomo crawled out. It was so unexpected that the Princess was dumbfounded and overjoyed at the same time. She ran toward him, again wetting her sleeves with tears and unable even to say something like "So the, you're safe and sound." For his part, Tametomo thought it strange that she had come looking for him by

² In the 103rd chapter of *Romance of the Three Kingdoms* it tells of a plan by Zhuge Liang to pile flammable materials in Gourd Vallen (Hulugu) in order to burn Sima Yi when he passed through, but torrents of rain prevented it from happening.

³ Tain Dan was a general in the state of Qi during the Warring States period. In one battle, he attached burning reeds to the horns and tails of 1,000 oxen and sent them charging into the army of Yan in a night raid.

herself. When he asked why, she explained everything from beginning to end: that beyond Mount Ōzato they were attacked from two sides by enemy forces, that many loyalists were slain, including Gikan and Denbei, and that all castles in addition to Ōzato were taken by Zen Kō. Tametomo sighed and said, “I, too, was taken in by Mōun’s sorcery, and now do not even know whether or not Shōju, Tsuru, and Kame survived. In the middle of the day it suddenly turned to the darkest night, and I ended up wandering into Shimabukuro where I was attacked with fire, and with no way to escape I decided that my time had come. I had placed the blade against my abdomen when it occurred to me: if I cut open the belly of the dead horse, quenched my thirst with its blood, pulled out its entrails, then hid myself inside its corpse, I might barely get through this inferno unscathed. The fires would eventually die down and I would be undetected by the enemy. That is why I didn’t come out before now. You, too, managed to fight your way through the rebel attack, so both of us have again cheated death and are together again for the rest of our lives. It seems we have been aided by the gods of Heaven and Earth. Anyone who would accomplish great things must not shrink before fire or water, but just bear the unbearable and wait for when one’s time comes. Emperor Gaozu of Han lost seventy battles, but won the battle of Jiulishan, taking all of China.⁴ I’ve now lost Shōju, Tsuru, and Kame, and have no support, but if they are still alive, we’ll surely come together again someday. And yet with our castles taken and our soldiers slain, we have no place to go. As a couple let us leave our fate to Heaven and escape as best we can. If rebel troops come again, regret will be of no use, so let us hurry and leave.” Facing such a grave situation, the Princess was impressed with her husband’s ready wit, and the two of them hurriedly left Shimaburukuro, running through the night not knowing where they were headed but at about daybreak arriving on the shore of Matsuyama beyond Kushigami.

But opposite this bleak shore there was no small island to which they could cross over. It was overgrown with thick reeds, and there were not even any huts of fisherfolk. They were hungry and exhausted, and felt as if they could not go another step. Wondering what to do and in a daze, they sat down on a boulder. From the direction of Kushigami a voice sounded close by: “Capture the escapees!” A gang of rebel soldiers appeared. Though both Tametomo and the princess were of fierce disposition, they were so exhausted that they had no way to fend them

⁴ In the “Xiang Yu benji” chapter of *Records of the Grand Historian (Shiji)* it does indeed tell of Gaozu’s seventy defeats by the armies of Chu, but it says nothing of his victory at Jiulishan. Bakin appears to have consulted other obscure sources.

off. Before them was the sea, and behind them was the enemy. Just at such a grim moment the sound of rowing came from among the reeds. It seemed that a boat was approaching. Then suddenly a loud voice came with a distinct accent recited,

“Hamachidori ato wa miyako e kayoedomo mi wa Matsuyama ni ne o nomi zo naku

Tracks of plovers on the beach, running a course to the capital—

But in Matsuyama only their cries are heard.⁵

That was by Sanuki Bay in Japan, and this place on a desolate shore in Kushigami in Ryukyu bears the same name: the inlet of Matsuyama. And I shall provide you with a boat that runs a course to the capital. Hurry and come aboard!” Then the voice repeated the recitation. If you wish to know who brought that boat ashore, it is explained in the next chapter.

⁵ This verse also appears in Chapter Fifteen, where Retired Emperor Sutoku recites it to Shiranui. It appears in *Hōgen monogatari* as well as in the “Shiramine” chapter of *Ugetsu monogatari*. “Tracks of plovers” is a common poetic conceit for written characters.

Chapter Fifty-Seven

On the shore of Matsuyama an island chieftain saves the couple,

On Hama Island Tametomo visits a mountain wizard.

Having made it to the shore of Matsuyama in Kushigami, Tametomo and the Princess were hungry and so exhausted that they could hardly stand when they heard a host of Mōun's troops shouting "Capture the escapees!" Though of fierce disposition, their strength was spent and there seemed to be no way for them to escape. Just then there was a rustling among the thick reeds by the waterline as someone rowed a small boat ashore and, beckoning to them said, "Hurry and come aboard!" They had no idea whether he was friend or foe, but they were in a desperate situation and had no time to inquire. Helping the Princess, Tametomo proceeded on unsteady legs and jumped into the boat, whereupon its owner began rowing, moving at a remarkable speed like a pebble thrown over ice. They were soon one league out on the open sea. Tametomo and the Princess were both amazed, and turning to the boatsman, asked "It must owe to karma from a former life that you unexpectedly saved us at a moment of imminent danger like that. Where are you from? Please tell us your name." The boatsman hurriedly set down the oars and, kneeling down on the floor of the boat, said, "It has been seven years since we parted, so of course you do not remember my face. I am the island chieftain of Kakeroma, Rin Tayu. Through a divine oracle I was informed that you were in trouble here, and took this swift boat to come and pick you up. It is a long story, so I shall save it for later. I can tell that you are famished, and have some things ready for you." Then from the floor of the boat he dutifully took out a rice tub and some broiled fish along with a flask of red saké and offered it to them. To them it was a most unexpected treat. The rice mixed with seaweed that was the islanders' usual fare tasted better than the rarest of delicacies, and the flask of country wine was like nectar. Tametomo again raised his cup and said to the Princess, "When I was surrounded by flames in Shimabukuro, I was unbearable thirsty and drank a lot of the horse's blood. Anyone who devours the flesh of a horse and does not soon thereafter drink wine will develop boils all over his body and soon die.¹ I did not eat the horse's flesh, but since I did imbibe its blood, now I do not feel well. That's why

¹ This folk belief is perhaps based on an episode appearing in the "Qin benji" chapter of *Records of the Grand Historian (Shiji)* in which Duke Mu (d. 621; r. 659-621) wished to make an alliance with a mountain tribe. After seeing them devour his horse, he offered them wine.

I have forgotten a day's hunger and am drinking saké to counter the ill effects of the horse. Today's repast is worth more than its weight in gold, a true gem. We must not forget that this is all an expression of the chieftain's sincere devotion." The Princess was even more impressed with the cordiality of the chieftain, and offered a sincere apology. "It was thanks to your devotion that seven years ago at Kakeroma I was able to sequester myself from the weary world, and so I should never forget your countenance. But because of my exhaustion and the predicament in which we found ourselves, I must have seemed very aloof not to recognize you. Please don't think me cold hearted." Rin Tayu hurriedly bowed his head, touching it to the floor of the boat. "For an islander from Kakeroma, the farthest of the thirty-six satellite islands from the capital and speaking in a rustic accent, I can hardly express my pleasure at being able once again to save you from danger on that desolate shore. The day before yesterday a man looking like a traveling mountain ascetic, ten feet tall, with a face as red as a jujube and a nose as big as three of these oarlocks put together, came to the gate of my house and urged me, saying 'On the morning of the day after tomorrow, Tametomo and the Princess will arrive at the shore of Matsuyama, east of Kushigami, and will be in difficult circumstances as they are closed in by Mōun's rebel troops. Quickly set out in a boat and go there to save them.' It was all very strange, and I timidly asked 'What kind of person are you, and where are you from? You do not look at all like someone from around here.' The mountain ascetic nodded. 'It stands to reason that you should have such questions. I am a messenger from the seventy-fifth Japanese emperor Sutoku, and have come from Mount Zōzu in the province of Sanuki. If you doubt what I have said and tarry, you will surely regret it. Go quickly!' It all seemed more strange than ever, but I sensed that it would be wrong of me to inquire further, and said, 'I shall do as you say. But in order to report the matter properly to Lord Hachirō, please tell me your name.' Instead of answering, the mountain ascetic recited three times the verse

Hamachidori ato wa miyako e kayoedomo mi wa Matsuyama ni ne o nomi zo naku

Tracks of plovers on the beach, running a course to the capital—

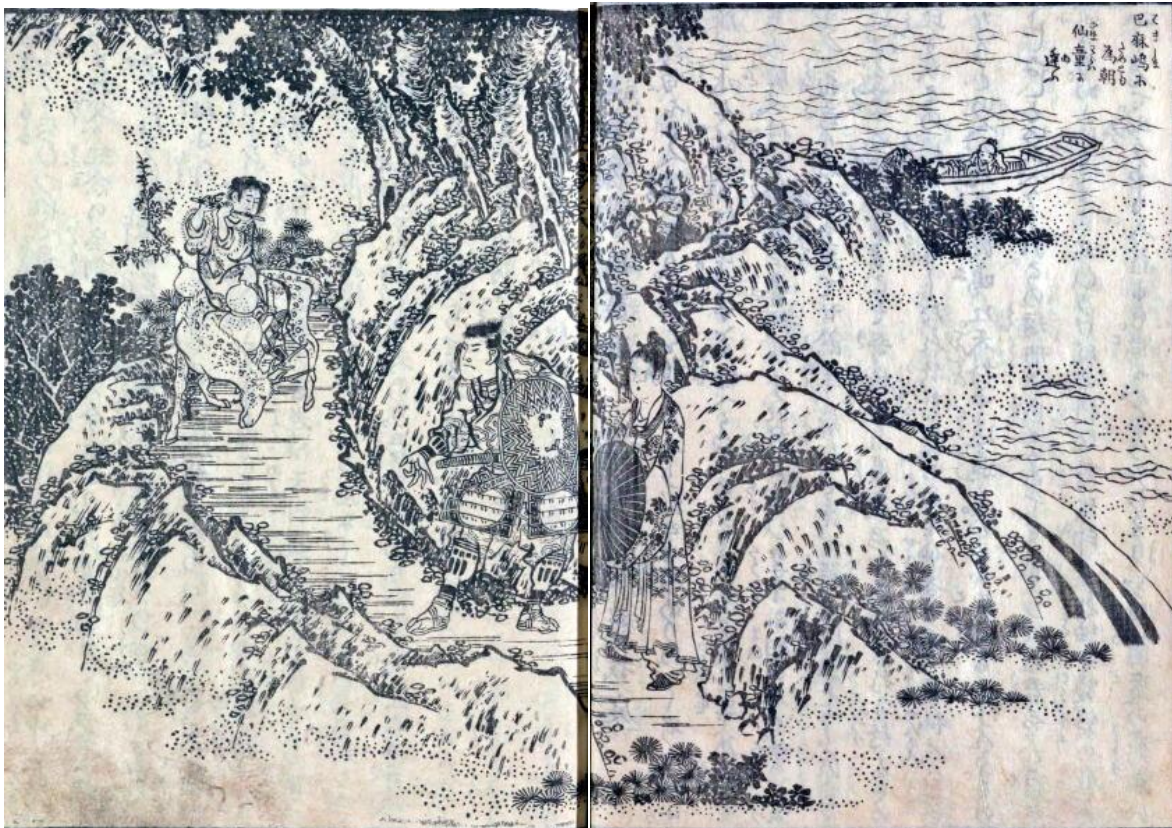
But in Matsuyama only their cries are heard.

and then disappeared into thin air. Since this was all very unusual I didn't take time to inform the islanders and only told my wife and children. Then I immediately prepared food and wine, all necessary provisions including water, and set out. It is more than a hundred leagues to Kushigami. I was worried that I might not make it in time, and put up a crude sail of woven

straw. Fortunately I had favorable winds. Since I was moving faster than usual, I arrived at the shore of Matsuyama yesterday at dusk, and felt as if I were in a dream. Wondering if Lord Hachirō and the Princess might be there, I craned my neck and looked about but saw no one standing on the shore. Since everything seemed so uncertain, I moored my boat among the reeds and went to a village to inquire about Ōzato, and was told of the defeat of the army at Naga River and Mount Ōzato, and that Lord Hachirō and the Princess had been slain. And indeed from the direction of Shimabukuro there was a great conflagration. The sky was thick with smoke, and from a distance flames could be seen leaping up. Feeling both wretched and sad, I stood there for some time in a stupor, but finally decided that I should trust in what the deity had told me and return to the boat and wait. I hurried back to the boat, but felt increasingly uneasy, and was not able to sleep a wink as I gazed out over the shore. Then just as the stranger said, you appeared there, pursued by enemy forces, and it occurred to me that this was indeed ‘in Matsuyama only their cries are heard.’ And so I recited the verse as I rowed the boat closer.” Hearing this detailed account, Tametomo said “There can be no doubt that the spirit of the Sanuki Cloistered Emperor saved me. When he was at Matsuyama in Sanuki, he recited that verse after he copied with his own hand the five Mahayana sutras and sent them to the capital. But because of the interference of the lay monk Junior Councilor Shinzei, the court again held a deliberation and disgracefully sent the sutras back. The Cloistered Emperor’s resentment grew, and he prayed to Heaven and to Earth, even entering the realm of demons, vowing that he would make not only the Emperor but all who had mistreated him aware of their wrongdoing. Since the name of the place—Matsuyama—is the same, he knew in advance that we would be here, and had someone from Kakeroma save us. The favor of a ruler indeed inspires awe.” Then he bowed to the east several times. The Princess also, moved to tears, likewise bowed behind her husband. Rin Tayu also, sensing the miraculous nature of what had transpired, was filled with wonder. Then at length Tametomo raised his head and related to Rin Tayu how he had administered death to Ri Yū, how at Shimabukuro he had been attacked with fire by Mōun, how he had crawled into the belly of the horse to escape the inferno, how the Princess had been defeated at Mount Ōzato and many of her soldiers had been slain, about how she had barely managed to fight her way out of the siege, and about how they had again been united at Shimabukuro. Rin Tayu reacted with surprise, with lamentation, and with joy, saying that it all owed to divine protection and it bespoke a promising future. As they spoke, the boat covered another two or three leagues. Turning again to the

chieftain, Tametomo asked, “For today’s return we do not have fair winds. Do you plan to dock somewhere else?” Rin Tayu replied, “Yes sir. You see in front of us what look like clouds are the islands of Kudaka, Tsuken, Hama, and Ike. Of these four small islands, Hama and Ike are uninhabited. Tonight we’ll moor the boat there and wait for fair winds in the morning, and then I’ll take you to Kakeroma.” Tametomo thought that a good plan. They rowed toward Hama Island, arriving at its desolate shore at the hour of the boar [10:00 p.m.].

Since they had provisions of food and water in the boat—and since there was no one living on the island—they had no reason to go ashore, and the three of them spent the long night in the boat with the helm as their pillow. With only the unsettling sound of waves lapping the side of the boat they were unable to sleep. When the light of stars seeping through the sedge roof of the boat began to fade and the first hint of dawn was cast over the waves, from the direction of the island’s mountain came the faint sound of a flute. Startled as he lay there, Tametomo could not understand why there should be such a sound on an uninhabited island, and when he voiced his suspicion, Rin Tayu also pricked up his ears and after listening for a moment, said, “Putting together various things I’ve heard, six or seven years ago people were talking about a wizard, though they didn’t say exactly where he was located. On clear days, that wizard would ride on a



crane up to the clouds, then sitting on one would make a tour of all thirty-six islands. Perhaps this island is his abode. Otherwise I can't imagine anyone coming to a desert island like this just to enjoy the scenery." Hearing that, Tametomo turned to the Princess and said, "What do you think? It's written in ancient books that immortals gather in Yingzhou and Penglai.² So one can't dismiss the possibility that even a lonely islet like this is also an enchanted place. If we're able to meet a wizard, he might provide us with a way to defeat Mōun. Let's go call on him." "I think so too. Let me go with you." Rinsing their mouths with brine from the sea and shedding their blood-spattered outer garments, they cleansed their spirits. Then leaving the chieftain Rin Tayu behind to guard the boat, the two of them assisted each other as they crawled up on the boulders on the shore and made their way in the direction of the flute music. It was now fully light as the sun rose above the waves. Looking about, they saw the most beautiful arrangements of sand and rockery, and the branches of pines and oaks resembled coiled dragons. It was a beautiful place, far removed from the dreary world. It was as if they had followed a stream upriver and arrived at Shangri-La.³ They somehow felt pure in spirit and light in body, having forgotten their exhaustion. Continuing their pace, they soon arrived at the foot of the mountain. As they drew closer to the sound, from the shadow of a tree a boy appeared playing a flute. He was riding on a white deer the same size as a three year-old colt. He was carrying two gourds, presumably containing fresh water, and broke off peach branches that were unseasonably in bloom. Perceiving that he was a wizard child, Tametomo and the Princess reverently approached and were about to address him when the boy stopped playing the flute and said with a smile, "Are you not Tametomo and the Princess? Yesterday my master told me, 'Tomorrow, the Lord of Ōzato, Hachirō Tametomo, will come with his wife Princess Shiarnui. Tell him that if he wants to assemble remaining forces and destroy Mōun, he should go directly to Kowajima and inquire of a certain person. There he shall receive reliable assistance. But this year Tametomo is forty-three, an unlucky year governed by the star Keito,⁴ which is now in the southeast corner of the sky. He should not yet move against the enemy. If he waits until spring of next year, it will be very auspicious. After he has succeeded and made a name for himself, I shall surely go and meet with him. Tell him to wait for me six years from now by the side of Mount Yaya.' Having said

² In Chinese folklore, two of three fabled islands in the Eastern sea inhabited by immortals.

³ Rather, Taoyuan, a mythical utopia described by the poet Tao Yuanming (c. 365-427) in his *Tao hua yuan ji* (*Peach Blossom Spring*).

⁴ A mythological celestial body associated with evil outcomes.

that, at midday yesterday my master rode on a crane toward the Eastern sea. Thus, my master is not on this island. You should return to your boat right away and cross over to Kowajima.” Not even given a chance to identify themselves, Tametomo and the Princess were struck with amazement and admiration, and did not doubt the message at all. “We humbly accept your master’s instructions, and only regret that we were not able to meet him. Will this wizard who is your master set foot on this island again? We should like to know his name.” Smiling, the boy replied, “It is impossible to speak of my master in explicit terms. When you meet him you will naturally understand.” Then he handed the branches of peach blossoms inserted in his gourds to Tametomo, who received them with both hands. Before Tametomo could ask what it meant, the boy hurriedly led the deer away, disappearing in the dense growth on the left so quickly that it was impossible to follow him. Filled with amazement they exchanged glances, then looked at the branches he had given them. The eight clusters of blossoms, though few, exuded a strong fragrance. The six clusters on the lower branch were all withered, and two on the top branch were still buds. He turned the branches over and found a small strip of paper attached with a verse written on it. Taking it in his hand, he read it together with the Princess.

Inishie no tameshi mo omoi-izu no umi ni koto tou tori no ato o miru kana

Recalling an incident from ancient lore, over the sea of Izu

my eyes follow the flight of a bird that called on me.⁵

Greatly surprised, Tametomo turned to the Princess. “This is a verse I composed back in the Hōgen era when I was on Ōshima in Izu province! There’s a long story behind it. When I was in my place of exile, a crane that long ago had been released by my great grandfather Lord Yoshiie with a golden tag attached to its foot came flying and landed next to me. This was the same crane that I previously came to this country to seek in order to fulfill the command of the Cloistered Emperor Toba, and that I exchanged a gem for with you. Now I had heard that the Emperor had released it. It crossed the sea to visit me in my place of exile. It seems that even birds are considerate. On the other side of the tag a verse in Chinese was inscribed:

Somnolent willows and leisurely blossoms surround the pavilion by the water,

The enchanted creature again leaves, returning to the Eastern Sea.

Spring, a time when foxes and mists come together,

Before I knew it, the bright moon casts its light in my garden.

⁵ This verse appears in chapter fourteen. See note 5 of that chapter for an explication.

I don't know who wrote that, but I dampened the tag and pressed it against my sleeve to leave an impression of it. Then I took out a brush and wrote my verse on the opposite side. After that, the crane ascended into the sky and disappeared in the clouds. Over the more than twenty years that have passed since then I have never quite understood the meaning of all that, but now I am grateful that I unexpectedly see my own handwriting here. As I consider this from various angles, ever since that time perhaps the crane has come and gone from this island. Other names for a crane include 'guest of immortals' [*Senkaku*] and 'horse of wizards' [*sennin no uma*]. They make their cries in deep valleys, they traverse the heights of the sky, so it is only to be expected that they should be on a lonely island like this. It seems that this strip of paper with my verse is as white as the crane's wings. I would not have expected it to be so, but the sleeve with the Chinese verse was stowed at the bottom of my tinder bag, which never leaves my side. I've lost many things during the several calamities I have faced, but I still have my father's precious sword which I received through a dream I had that night at the mausoleum in Sanuki, and my tinder bag. That, too, is miraculous. Take a look at this." Then digging through the tinder bag attached to his waist, he pulled out the sleeve. Looking at the poem inscribed on it, and then at the verse composed by her husband, the Princess felt blessed to have such miraculous events unfold before her eyes, and sensing that it augured well for their future, urged him saying "This is all the legacy of your great grandfather Lord Yoshiie, and of your filial devotion, that the gods of Heaven and Earth as well as all tutelary deities have taken pity on you and revealed your future flourishing. The 'incident from ancient lore over the sea of Izu' and the 'flight of the bird that called on you'—you see all of that now again on this island. Having seen clearly this marvelous sign, we should go immediately to Kowajima." Tametomo responded, "I think so too. Let's go." They hurried down the path back to the shore where Rin Tayu quickly prepared the boat to receive them, helping them to board, and then asked them what they had seen. Smiling broadly they told him about the boy wizard they had met at the foot of the mountain, and about the matching poetry, leaving nothing out. Rin Tayu was struck with amazement. He untied the boat and set out for Kowajima. As he rowed, the eight clusters of blossoms continued to exude their fragrance, and it was especially auspicious that the six withered clusters revived and added to the scent. The two clusters of buds also blossomed. "This is indeed an auspicious sign." Both the Princess and Rin Tayu expressed felicitations. Riding on the waves, Tametomo pointed the branches of blossoms toward the shore, vowing "If I defeat Mōun and purge his evil from the

three provinces, then that peach tree will continue to thrive.” It is said that after that evening the tide pulled back several hundred yards forming a shoreline on which peaches blossomed year after year.

Chapter Fifty-Eight

Shooting a flying bird, the child prodigy discusses tactics,
On Kowajima, father and son reunite.

And so, the island chieftain of Kakeroma, Rin Tayu, rowed away from the shore of Hama Island, intently making his way on a course he knew well. Steered due west, the boat sailed with the speed of an arrow. Three islands could be seen to the south. Responding to Tametomo's inquiry, Rin Tayu explained "East Horse Tooth Mountain, West Horse Tooth Mountain, and what you see to the southwest is Mount Kume." Thus looking at Chūzan to the north and gazing over the waves at such islands as Tonaki and Akuni, on the swift boat led by the gods they glided over dozens of leagues of the calm autumnal waters for half a day and at half past the hour of the sheep [3:00 p.m.] arrived at the shore of Kowajima.

Since this too was an uninhabited island, there were no sounds on the desolate shore but that of plovers calling to each other and waves lapping the rocks. They moored the boat and Tametomo helped the Princess go ashore. With the boat secured, Rin Tayu accompanied them. It was a smaller island than they had expected, but its mountain looked as if it had been artificially constructed of boulders piled up on one another. The cries of unfamiliar birds mixed with the zither-like sound of wind in the pines and the surging waves beating like a drum. It was a delightful scene that left one feeling refreshed. The three of them climbed the mountain and then descended into a valley and entered into a grove of peach trees. They appeared to bloom year round because there were both blossoms and fruit. Their fragrance seemed to be both intoxicating and sobering. They wondered if there might be a hermitage belonging to a renowned immortal. When they approached the grove they heard the sound of recitation. Thinking that this must be it, the three of them nodded to each other and peered from among the trees to see two figures within the grove: an elderly wizard and a boy wizard facing each other and sitting on a bed of flowers. The old man's brows and beard were white, and though he was as slender as a withered pine he was sturdy of frame and appeared to be a manly man. The boy had tousled hair. He was of uncertain age, but his voice suggested that he was over ten, but not more than twelve or thirteen. His eyes were clear, his brows prominent, his lips red, and his eloquent voice flowing and clear as a bell. Their shoulders and waists were covered with plaited leaves, and beneath those could be seen the hems of robes hanging in tatters, but their comportment was very proper.

It was the boy who sat on the high stone while the old man assumed a seat well below him, and listening respectfully to the boy's recitation would occasionally comment. Remaining hidden behind the trees, Tametomo listened intently to the recitation and, finding it strange, tugged at the Princess's sleeve and whispered, "What do you make of it? I thought he would be reading a Taoist text on the basics of longevity, on cultivation of the true way, or on some elixir of immortality, but what he's reciting is a book on military tactics. Long ago Lord Ōe Masafusa gave to my great grandfather Lord Yoshiie a secret transmission of military tactics, the 'Tiger Chapter' of the *Kin'etsushū*.¹ It was then passed down to inheriting sons in our Minamoto family, and my older brother Yoshitomo received it. But during the Heiji disturbance when Yoshitomo headed east he carried it in his breast pocket. I heard only that he had been slain by Osada at Utsumi, Noma in Owari Province, but all these years have had no way to find out who finally got that book, and I have greatly regretted its loss. But what that boy is now reciting sounds very much like it. Is that it, or isn't it?" Then in an elevated voice the boy recited, "'Now Fan Kuai of Han obtained the battle cloak and wore it over his armor, thus receiving praise from all the world for his filial devotion.'² Now making the cloak in question long or short depends on a technique know through oral transmission. The strap on the upper right is call *teishaku*,³ the one in the middle is *tenjō*, and the one on the upper left is *tōjin*. In the middle, the two celestial bodies of sun and moon are portrayed, and the Four Heavenly Kings⁴ are inscribed." Then the old man added his critique, "the theory that the name of the battle cloak [*horo*] began with Fan Kuai is not found in any Chinese book. It was a theory that was created later based on the characters of its name. It is also written that 'The battle cloak is a garment woven with bird feathers. What is now called a half-coat [*haori*, characters meaning 'woven with feathers'] was originally this battle cloak. It was worn over armor when attacking a castle, and was used to deflect arrows.' What do you make of this theory?" Smiling at this comment, the boy replied eloquently, "Some old theories might say so, but Fan Kuai would not have had time to think of such things. And the theory that it was woven with bird feathers is not at all cogent. Now the word *horo* also means

¹ Ōe Masafusa (1041-1111) was a noted poet, scholar, and tutor to emperors. The *Kin'etsushū* is a volume of martial tactics that had been passed down in the Ōe family. The extant version transmitted in the Hayashi family contains no "Tiger Chapter" (*Tora no maki*).

² Purportedly from the "Tiger Chapter." It is unclear what source Bakin used.

³ Or more commonly, Taishakuten, Śakra in Sanskrit, ruler of the highest heaven.

⁴ Shitennō. These are Tamonten, Jikokuten, Zōchōten, and Kōmokuten.

‘bag.’ When one puts it on, it does resemble a bag. In chapter seventeen of the *Sandai jitsuroku*,⁵ during the reign of Emperor Seiwa, on the eighteenth of the third month of the twelfth year of Jōkan [871], the governor of Tsushima, Lord Ono no Harukaze of the junior fifth rank, presented a petition regarding two matters. One included the phrase, ‘Among the accoutrements of a warrior, armor is of great importance. Even if the armor is thin, if there is a battle cloak, it can help to preserve one’s life.’ Therefore, it was not a robe of feathers. It was written variously—*母衣*, *武羅*, or *保侶*—but those are only orthographic conventions and have nothing to do with the meaning. There is no name in China for this kind of battle gear. It is an ancient practice of Japan.” Overhearing this, Tametomo was struck with amazement. “I am filled with awe to think of his future. On a lonely island like this that there should be such a prodigy so thoroughly versed in ancient and contemporary military lore is miraculous and wondrous.” Tametomo marveled as he and the Princess exchanged glances. Then the old man moved closer to the boy. “Your inventiveness has produced that theory, but it is only bookishness and is not a strategy for crushing an enemy. What would you do if you were in a battle on the water and fell in?” “In such a case there is the method of the rhinoceros, or the miraculous method of the Dragon King. If one has mastered these in advance, he can be sure to escape drowning.” “It is well known that during the reign of Emperor Tenji there was Fujiwara no Chikata,⁶ and in Emperor En’yū’s time Shuten Dōji had his lair on Mount Senjō in Tanba.⁷ What tactic could one use easily to destroy such devils?” Nodding, the boy replied, “There is a method of dealing with such. If you use a file to enlarge the hole at the hilt of your sword and wear it at your waist, then intone this incantation before mowing to the left, even a specter can be cut down.” “Yes, but demons and devils can hide themselves quickly, and then you would not be able to aim a sword at anything.” “In such a case you can intone a *dhāranī* quietly five times, then locking together fingers of both hands, peer through them. If you do so, no ghost or goblin will be able to hide from you. If the enemy is

⁵ *Nihon Sandai jitsuroku*, compiled in 901, was an officially commissioned history covering the years 858-887.

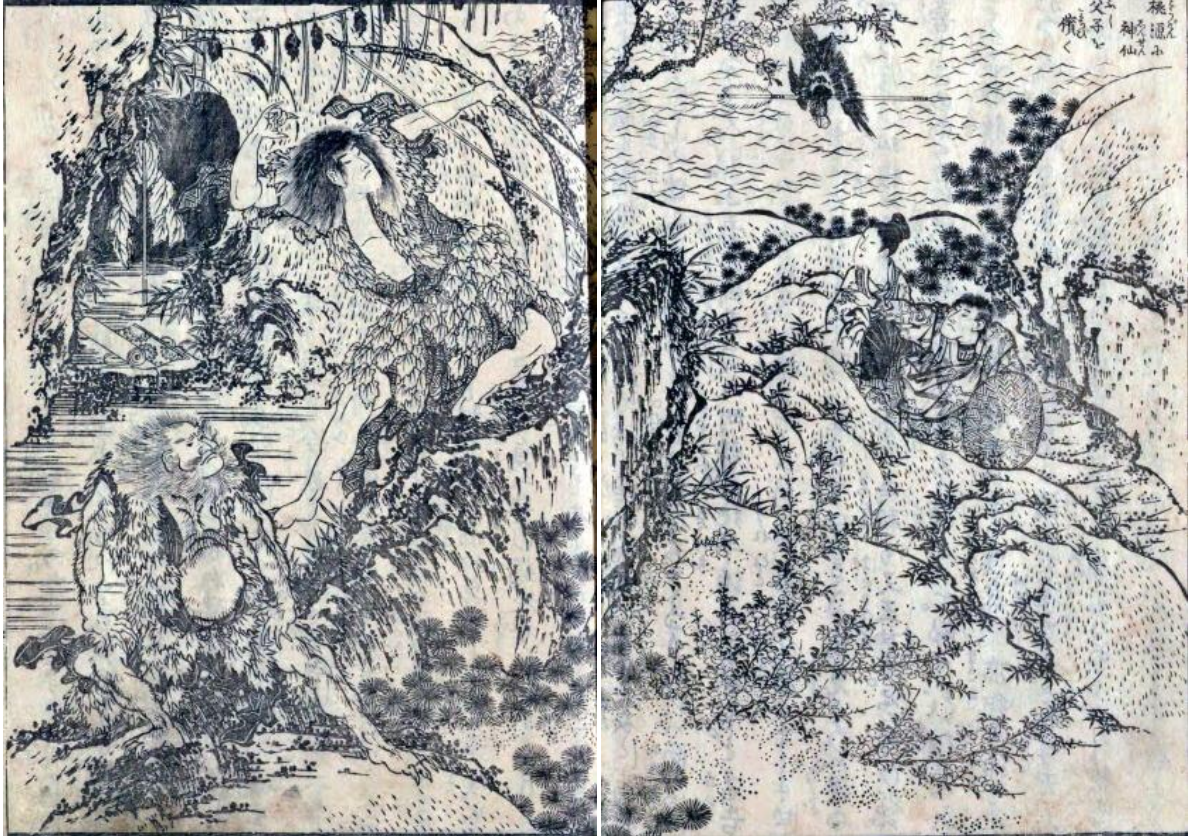
⁶ According to the sixteenth volume of the *Taiheiki*, during the reign of Emperor Tenji (626-672; r. 661-672), Fujiwara no Chikata released four demons to wreak havoc in society. Ki no Tomoo subdued them with a verse:

Kusa mo ki mo waga ōkimi no kuni nareba izuku ka oni no sumika naru beki

Since even grasses and trees are part of our sovereign’s realm,

Where therein could demons possibly make their home?

⁷ Emperor En’yū (959-991; r. 969-984). Shuten Dōji was a mythical leader of demons that torment society. He was finally slain by Minamoto no Yorimitsu (948-1021).



great in number, then depending on the situation you can use the battle formation of spreading out like a crane's wing [*kakuyoku*], of encircling like the goose's neck [*gankō*], or slithering like a snake [*chōja*] and you'll strike all of them, sparing none. Under a valiant commander there are no weak soldiers. Whatever battle formation the enemy adopts, if you strike boldly, breaking through their ranks, then you can shoot down their commander with a sure arrow, like this!" Even as he spoke he arose and fitted an arrow into the bow next to him and, pulling the string taut he shot a crow that had flown high in the sky after pecking at the peaches. The arrow pierced both wings, and it fell to the earth with a thud. Seeing this, Tametomo spread his fan and in a loud voice praised him, "You shot it!" Only then did the boy and the old man realize that someone was on the shadow of the trees. Caught by surprise, they called out, "It's strange to hear someone's voice on an island where no boat ever docks. We don't know where you are from or how you drifted here, but we miss associating with people. We want to hear about you. Please come here." At that, the three of them hurriedly came forth from the grove of peach trees. Respectfully addressing the boy and the old man, Tametomo said, "I am the Lord of Ōzato in the Sannan province of Ryukyu. I recently punished the traitorous minister Ri Yū with death and attacked the rebel sorcerer Mōun. At first we were elated to be winning, but he resorted to

sorcery and all our troops were slain. We as a couple barely managed to escape and with the help of a contact in Kakeroma we boarded a boat on the shore of Matsuyama and went to Hama Island, where a wizard instructed us to come here. It is our request that you two wizards use your miraculous powers to help us destroy Mōun and relieve the suffering of the people. The former King Shō Nei was incompetent and, lacking foresight, appointed flatterers to high positions. Finally led astray by a sorcerer, the kingdom was lost. It would seem, then, that the Tenson dynasty has died out, but my wife is the inheriting daughter of King Shō Nei. Seeking justice, we have risked the winds and waves and have made this unannounced visit to the enchanted realm to tell of our aspirations and to plead for divine assistance. We beg your forgiveness.” The boy looked back at the old man, then said in an aloof manner, “They say that this is one of the thirty-six satellite islands of Ryukyu, but boats never come here. As guardians of an island far removed from the transient world, we know nothing of such things.” For a time, the old man made no reply, but only looked intently at Tametomo. With eyes red and filling with tears, he said, “Only seven years have passed since we parted, but your retainer has been wizened by the blast of briny winds and, covered with grime and wearing a garment of leaves, I look more like a mountain ape than like my former self, but you must remember my face. I am Half-mile Stone-throwing Kiheiji.” Then the boy, tossing his bow aside, said, “So, this guest is my father? I am Sutemaru.” He then approached, tears preceding all questions, his sorrow plain to see. At this unexpected revelation, both Tametomo and the Princess were so elated that they shed tears of joy to think that in this life and time they could again see their child’s face. They sighed as they brushed his tousled hair from his forehead. Then looking back at Kiheiji, Tametomo said, “Hey, emaciated Half-mile Stone-thrower, you’ve aged more than I would have expected. But Sutemaru has grown so big. Is this all a dream? If so, may I never wake up. There are so many things to say and so many questions to ask. Anguish indeed comes from the bonds of affection.” When one who lives by the bow becomes aware of the pathos of things—the opposite of his familiar sense of valor—then his emotions come to the surface. Seeing this and considering her own lot, the Princess was unable to raise her head and clung to Rin Tayu, sobbing. He did not fully understand the situation, but shed tears of sympathy.

Then wiping his tears, Kiheiji said, “There is something I must say first of all. Seven years ago in the autumn of the second year of Angen [1176] when our boat broke to pieces in the storm and the crew, including Takama and Isohagi, were swallowed by the waves, I held the boy

out of the water with my left arm and swam, not minding the billows. But with no shore in sight and having to fight the current, my strength started to give out. Just as I was about to give up and sink, an enormous fish emerged and took us on its back. I had no idea where we were, but we arrived at this island. I later concluded that the spirits of Takama and Isohagi had possessed the great fish in order to save the child. And so we had barely made it to this shore when I found that at sometime or other he had stopped breathing. I called his name again and again but to no avail. I was distraught and mortified to think that after narrowly escaping death beneath the waves and coming here as castaways, I alone remained alive. I stamped my feet out of frustration, thinking that I must do something, yet there was nothing to do but cry. Just as I was about to cut my belly open, through the unexpected aid of a wizard the boy immediately revived. Not only that, but the wizard presented us with the secret text of the ‘Tiger Chapter’ from the *Kin’etsushū* that had been passed down in the Minamoto family, saying, ‘I have kept this book for the child. I have a special bond with Tametomo. You, Kiheiji, must do your utmost to protect and raise Sutemaru, instructing him in the martial and literate arts. Make bows in such-and-such a manner, and if you wait patiently, a time will come for you to use them. You must not doubt that there will be a reunion of parent and child. From this day forth I shall move to a different island.’ No sooner had he spoken than he ascended into the sky. Now that I think about it, that wizard went to Hama Island, and then led you here. Back then, in the middle of the peach grove we found a large crane feather and a golden tag. On that tag it was inscribed that during the Kōhei era [1058-1065], Lord Hachiman Tarō Yoshiie released numerous cranes having attached tags to their feet. Following the wizard’s instructions, we used the crane’s feather to fletch arrows, and made arrowheads out of deer horns. We consecrated the first arrow to the Grand Shrine of Ise, the second to the Shrine of Hachiman, and the third to the deity of Aso. We have never neglected to venerate these. Also, taking peach branches pointing east we fashioned bows, using wisteria vines for strings. I also made a horse using twine twisted from tree bark for its reins, then used it to teach the boy how to shoot from horseback. By drawing in the sand I taught him how to write. With his peerless intelligence and wisdom he could recite verbatim from unread books, and having mastered both literary and martial arts, he exceeded my meager abilities. Seeing his extraordinary talent I lamented the fact that we were stuck as mere guardians of this island, and longed for the day when I could hand him over to you and just hear the words ‘he’s been raised well, and you have taught him well.’ Then I could die peacefully on the spot. I have lived this

long life thanks to the peaches that blossom and bear fruit throughout the year, but have felt the emptiness of not being able to show loyalty to you. I trust that in your wisdom you will be able to perceive what I so ineptly have put into words.” Thus this uncommonly loyal retainer related in detail what had transpired. Even if one could count the grains of sand on the shore, one could never fathom the miraculous bond here between master and retainer. Praising him, Tametomo took out the strip of paper with his verse and the sleeve onto which the Chinese poem had been impressed, and explained their history. “What you have said accords completely with this. Why did that wizard take such pity on me? It’s difficult to understand, but there must be a reason for it. Not only that, but of the eight cluster of blossoms on the peach branch that the boy wizard on Hama Island gave to me, six have withered and two are in bud. So every time I look at it, it has increased in color and scent. When I came to this island I finally understood that they will all blossom anew. The six clusters that have withered represent me, the Princess, Rin Tayu, Shōju, Tsuru, and Kame, while the two buds represent you and Sutemaru. My only regret concerns Takama Tarō and Isohagi. But I shall no doubt meet Shōju, Tsuru, and Kame again.” Then after he related who those three were and what had happened to them, Kiheiji and Sutemaru exchanged glances, feeling deeply grateful for this remarkable auspicious omen, and at the same time felt disheartened. Kiheiji asked “You have mentioned all of your allies and followers, but have said nothing about Shiranui or my wife. Why did they not come with you?” Sutemaru also asked, “Where is my mother? You mentioned that the eldest daughter of the king of Ryukyu became your second wife. Does that mean that my mother is no longer in this world? You surely did not part from her because you tired of her. Please let me know.” The anguish the father felt at that question exceeded that of the child who posed it. At first unable to answer, at length he nodded and sighed, saying, “After we had left the province of Higo and encountered that storm, I did not expect to survive it, but like Princess Ototachibana,⁸ she jumped into the sea and sank to the bottom. And yet the tempest did not subside. The boat finally capsized and dozens of the crew ended up in the bellies of fish. I ought to have perished also, but through the divine protection of the spirit of the Sanuki Cloistered Emperor, I drifted to Kakeroma, one of the satellite islands of Ryukyu. I could not endure hearing about the chaos into which that country had been pitched. At Shimakita on Little Ryukyu I saved Princess Nei from mortal danger. I was

⁸ The wife of the legendary Yamato Takeru, who jumped into raging waters to pacify the sea god and save her husband.

appointed Lord of Ōzato and though reluctant, was unable to refuse matrimony with the Princess. Many years have passed, but I never imagined that my son was on an unpopulated island that was part of the kingdom of Ryukyu, and hence did not inquire after you, but now we have been reunited. This is all due to the divine aid from the gods and buddhas that protect the Minamoto family. It also owes to Kiheiji's loyal devotion. Please don't grieve." Sutemaru listened intently to these words of consolation, biting down on the sleeve of his tattered clothing so as not to cry, then said, "It was autumn of my sixth or seventh year when we parted, so I don't have a clear memory of her face. But all living things that have a father necessarily also have a mother. Each year as I have watched eaglets in the pine trees up on the mountain, as long as they are in their nest they call for their mother and father. How could I not recognize my father, or my mother? And on evenings when the wind blows from the sea, the plovers on the shore call to their friends. But I've had no parents, no friends, only Half-mile Stone-thrower. My only wish has been that the wizard would at least once lead me to meet my father and mother. I never tired of gazing out over the open sea wondering when that might happen as I knelt down in nostalgic worship of the morning sun and sky that also encompassed my native land. I prayed that the gods and buddhas might grant my parents long and happy lives. But though I have been blessed by the gods, there is no way now for me to meet my mother. Even as I am elated at today's unanticipated reunion with my father, how wretched it is of me to let my grief overshadow it. Where is this Kyushu, whence comes so much vexation of my soul? When I hear that she parted the waves, sacrificing herself, I find myself longing all the more for the sea, so familiar to me from gazing at it morning and night." Then he let his thoughts race to the surf pounding far beyond the trees, raising their mist, but he felt vexed that his mind could not reach it. Sensing his son's state of mind, Tametomo tried to encourage him, saying, "Sutemaru, it stands to reason that you should be grieved, but you must not lament your mother's loss. Since Shiranui had always been a brave heroine, for the sake of her husband and child she saved the Princess from mortal danger, her spirit possessing the Princess, who now calls herself Princess Shiranui. This is not some frivolous hearsay. Though her countenance is somewhat dissimilar, her manner of speaking and her valor and wisdom are not in the least different. Regard her as your mother. Princess, why don't you say something? You're usually so bold in manner. Do a mother's feelings only lead to tears like that?" Unable to bear it, Sutemaru doubled over with sobbing loudly, wondering if she was truly his mother, and if this was her voice. Clinging to the Princess, he bemoaned her

silence, saying, “If though your body wasted away under the waves and your spirit remained in this land, possessing the body of someone of noble lineage and becoming the second wife of my father, then you are my mother. Why do you not say even one word, calling my name or saying ‘my son’? This island’s mountain—or the depths and breadth of the sea—are nothing compared to the debt of gratitude I owe you for having given me birth. I have yet to show you even one day of filial devotion. I hear about my brother on Ōshima,⁹ about my sister in Owari,¹⁰ or about Tomowaka who is now in Shimotsuke,¹¹ though I met him¹² when I did not yet know east from west and would not recognize him even if we were to meet. Though I have many siblings, because of the vicissitudes of this world I do not know them and they do not know me. Please have pity on me and let me call you mother.” He sobbed as he continued to clutch at her sleeve. She soon embraced him and said, “It is only natural that you should feel resentment, but if at the beginning I had announced myself as your mother, then Kiheiji, who knew my features, would have thought my claim false, and so I just shed tears in silence. Princess Nei had a connection with your father from the time he traded a gem for the crane he had been seeking, and thus she was possessed and appeared again in this land as Shiranui. They say that the parent-child bond is only for this life and that at death one is aware of both past and future, but though I am reembodied because of attachment to my child, I had no idea that I would wander here. My husband has many children, but all have someone to rely on, though I heard later that unfortunately Tarō Tameyori committed suicide on Ōshima. You are the only child I bore, and you too have met with misfortune. How many sleepless night did I spend thinking of how old you would be, or of what clothing I would make for you, and even when I sewed a garment to adjust its length for a child who would be your age, it tore my heart to think of your long absence. People do not know the grief of a mother whose thoughts are filled with such yearning, but when I compare it to the many hardships endured by Kiheiji on this desolate shore, it counts for little. His efforts paid off, and it is true what they say, that ‘From the time the bead tree is but a sprout it is fragrant, excelling all other trees. Before the phoenix is even hatched its song surpasses that of all birds.’¹³ Having grown up on a desert island and having mastered the martial

⁹ Tameyori, who sacrificed himself as described in chapter twenty-two.

¹⁰ Shimagimi, who was born on Ōshima and later became the adopted daughter of the chief priest of Atsuta Shrine as described in chapter twenty-four.

¹¹ Described in chapter twenty-one.

¹² See chapters twenty-nine and thirty.

¹³ The source of this citation is uncertain.

arts, you are in no way inferior to your distant ancestors Lord Yoriyoshi and Lord Yoshiie. You are what you are because of your parentage. If not you, who else could possibly destroy Mōun? Your fortune in battle will not be like that of your parents. May you resolve the chaos, nobly and graciously relieve the suffering of the people, live ten years longer than a tortoise, and may your posterity flourish over generations to come.” Those words of felicitation were followed by a stream of motherly tears. Hearing these tearful words, Sutemaru pressed his damp sleeve against hers and consoled her, saying, “To think about it, I once again experience the affection of a devoted mother. There could be no greater joy than this. Please make an end of your tears.” Slapping his knee, Kiheiji said with astonishment, “Truly, the Princess’s manner of speaking is the same as that of Shiranui, and even her countenance bears similarity. It seems that after that parting through death in autumn seven years ago, this reunion on this island between parent and child, master and retainer, is taking place not on the streets of the underworld but at the gates of immortality.” Rin Tayu also added to these words of felicitation. Sutemaru asked “Who is this who has accompanied you?” Nodding, Tametomo summoned the chieftain to come closer and explained, “This is the island chieftain of Kakeroma, Rin Tayu. When I first drifted to that island, it was because of him that I gained the respect of the islanders. Later, he also hid the Princess in his house so that she could avoid being harmed by Mōun. I shall tell you later what a villain Mōun is, and about the wickedness of the Grand Minister Ri Yū, about Shōju and his wife, and about the filial devotion of Tsuru and Kame to their parents. At any rate, the day before yesterday I suffered defeat in battle, losing all of my soldiers. As a couple, we found each other and, taking flight throughout the night and finally arriving at the shore of Matsuyama, exhausted and famished with the rebel forces in close pursuit, we saw no way of escape. But having been told of our plight by the spirit of the Sanuki Cloistered Emperor, this island chieftain had brought his boat to the shore and was waiting for us. Thus we were able not only to escape disaster, but were blessed with this reunion. This was all because of the divine aid of the Sanuki Cloistered Emperor and the devoted loyalty of the island chieftain.” At these gracious words, Rin Tayu deferentially raised his head and said, “As you can see, I was raised on the desolate shores of a minor country and have no knowledge of anything else, but I would give my life for Lord Hachirō and the Princess. Ignorant though I am, my heart is sincere, and I am grateful to be a part of their company. It is an honor not only to me, but to my island.”

Then Kiheiji plucked six or seven peaches from branches loaded with fruit, offering them to Tametomo and the Princess, and also to Rin Tayu. Rinsing them in spring water, Tametomo first of all offered the peaches to the same three shrines to which Sutemaru had consecrated the arrows, then after offering a prayer in his heart, said to Sutemaru, “Peaches eradicate evil spirits. That is seen in the ‘Age of the Gods’ chapter,¹⁴ and also in *Fengsu tongyi*.¹⁵ I’ve seen my comrades blessed by peaches. This is an auspicious sign that Mōun will be destroyed. And it is wonderful that those three shrines have been venerated on this island. It is regrettable that you don’t know the background of those. Crows are messengers of the deity of Kumano. Thus during a battle when Emperor Jinmu became lost on the mountain path, Amaterasu ōmikami had the Yada crow lead the battle. Though you venerate Amaterasu, why are you stingy with a peach and why did you shoot down a crow? That was awfully careless.” Humbly accepting this admonition, Sutemaru replied, “What you say is true. With peaches as sustenance we have lived seven years on this island without destroying any life. But though I shot a crow, the arrow went through its feathers without harming it. I only wished to warn it not to peck at peaches. I shall now set it free.” Picking up the fallen crow, he pulled the arrow out, whereupon it flapped its wings and, cawing, flew up into the sky beyond the mountain. Seeing the crow off, everyone was amazed, praising him and saying, “Even Yang Youji who could shoot off a willow leaf at a hundred paces would not be capable of such a feat!”¹⁶ Tametomo also, realizing that what he had said was a bit foolish, offered just one bit of praise, “You performed admirably. You are indeed one who can use bow and arrow to bring a country under rule.” Sutemaru felt that his father’s praise was more than he deserved, but Kiheiji felt quite gratified. Thus, parents and child, master and retainers, sat in a circle on the mat of flowers discussing with an air of melancholy their seven years of trials and tribulations as well as the chaos prevailing in Ryukyu. Since it was the beginning of the winter months night fell early and the familiar moon seemed as if it had risen just to provide them with light. Whole-hearted devotion is indeed godlike. Tametomo and the Princess had been brought to ruin, but were now enjoying a flood of good fortune without having

¹⁴ In the “Age of the Gods” (*Kami no yo no maki*) chapter of the *Nihon shoki*, during Izanagi’s escape from the underworld he threw peaches at his demonic assailants to drive them back.

¹⁵ A miscellany compiled around 195 by Ying Shao. Vol. eight includes a description of the folk belief that peaches ward off evil spirits.

¹⁶ *Zhanguo* tells this story about the famed archer Yang Youji.

sought it. Is it not natural that a child with such lineage should become a king or a great commander?

Chapter Fifty-Nine

Kiheiji builds a boat and they leave the lone island,
Following an arrow, Sutemaru heads for Sanhoku.

Lord of Ōzato Hachirō Tametomo, having unexpectedly encountered Sutemaru and Kiheiji, shared with each other their feeling of having been separated, as if they had all been revived from the grave. The Princess also spoke of all she had been through. Her manner of speaking was not a whit different from that of Shiranui, and there was a resemblance in her countenance. Since Kiheiji was so amazed by that, Sutemaru finally realized it also and was at the same time both overjoyed and grieved as he felt that his compassionate mother had been reborn. Having spent the night on that island sitting in a circle, parents and child as well as master and retainers were reluctant to see it end. Tametomo related to Sutemaru and Kiheiji all of the details about Ri Yū and Mōun, and added “From my childhood I had never once tasted defeat in battle. Our army’s downfall during Hōgen was the result of Lord Yorinaga’s interference and his not adopting my strategy. Thus, when I heard of that Mōun, the demon monk who had appeared from an ancient tomb on Mount Kyūkyū, I thought that even if sorcery is difficult to counter, since ‘sorcery cannot defeat virtue,’¹ I assumed I could defeat him in one battle. But looking down on him in such a manner was the greatest mistake I have ever made. Not only that, but I did not realize that this year was an unlucky one for me, and that therefore starting a war during it led to ignominious defeat. Therefore, if all of us remain in hiding on this island for a while and wait until next spring, then we can attack suddenly, take Mōun’s head and put it on the gate to our camp. All this is very plain. Rin Tayu, early tomorrow morning take your boat back to Kikeroma, and then next spring around the third month, bring another boat here and pick us up.” Rin Tayu responded, “What you say is not without reason, but Mōun’s sorcery includes an all-seeing eye, so it will be dangerous for you to stay here. If the rebel forces come, you would have no troops to support you, neither would you have boats in which to escape. Though you might hold them at bay for a time with your dauntless valor, you would be impossibly outnumbered, and there are limits to human strength. If you were taken captive, regret would be of no use. You must think it foolish for someone as ignorant as I to say so, but even the wise can be mistaken,

¹ A phrase from the “Yin benji” chapter of *Records of the Grand Historian* (*Shiji*).

and even the foolish can be right.² Those who are farsighted will realize when disaster is close at hand.³ All of us at Kakeroma have long been attracted to the benevolence and virtue shown by you and the Princess. Quickly depart from the island and come to ours. Having been oppressed by Ri Yū and Mōun these many years, the islanders would receive you hospitably.⁴ And it isn't only the people of Kakeroma; Kikai, Uken, Yuro, Toku Island, in fact from what I hear from all thirty-six islands, I have no doubt that they would follow you." Tametomo was unable immediately to respond to a suggestion made in such good faith. Neither could the Princess or Kiheiji determine which option would be better, and as they were trying to read each other's reactions, Sutemaru said with a smile, "Everything Rin Tayu now said was spoken with complete sincerity and would seem to be a good plan, but thought it seems simple, it might actually be dangerous. A dragon does not mind the depths of the sea, and when it stays there, it is beyond human powers to do anything about it. But it can be lured up onto land with bait. But isn't that being led astray by temporary advantage and forgetting oneself because of desire? If you were to go to Kakeroma and muster the full support of the islanders, even if he were blind Mōun would immediately become aware of it and would soon attack. And as you said, father, this is an unlucky year for you, so you should avoid battles. That would become apparent if you did not hide in the depths but allowed yourself to be lured by temporary advantage. Perhaps you find it unpleasant that your son, immature and weak as he is, should interject his unsolicited views, but I say these things out of concern for you, my parents." Slapping his knee, Tametomo said, "Your arguments accord with my thoughts. So then, should we remain on this island? Would that bode well or ill?" Sutemaru replied, "In my humble view, as long as both of you remain here, even Mōun's all-seeing eye won't detect you, because I have already spent seven years on this island and that wizard monk is not aware of me. Had he known of me, he surely would have realized that I am his enemy. It is because he didn't know of me that I remained safe. Since this is due to the protection of the mountain wizard, as long as you, my parents, remain here, though it may seem dangerous it is actually safe. Not only that, but you were led here to Kowajima by the mountain wizard on Hama Island. 'Hama' suggests the meaning 'defeating devils 破魔,' and

² A phrase appearing in the "Huaiyin hou zhuan" chapter of *Records of the Grand Historian (Shiji)*.

³ From the "Wei Ling gong" chapter of the *Analects*.

⁴ Literally "with rice in bamboo containers and beverages in pots," a phrase from the "Liang Hui wang" chapter of *Mengzi* where it describes reception of someone of high rank.

‘Kowa’ is close in meaning to ‘defeating seduction 蠱破,’ that is, defeating seductive devils. In Japan, the little bows boys use to shoot sparrows at the beginning of spring are called ‘hama.’ Isn’t that like my making a bow and arrows and then venerating them as deities, all examples of the names of things expressing their essence? Therefore, father, if you again strike Mōun from these two islands, you will be sure to have victory. Just let Rin Tayu return, and remain here this year.” His remonstrance was well reasoned, and everyone, from Tametomo to Kihieji and Rin Tayu were impressed with his intelligence and wisdom. Seeing the brilliance of her son, the Princess could not help wetting her sleeves with tears of joy, saying “Truly, just as an inchworm extends itself and then contracts, by first contracting for a time, cultivating strength and awaiting an opportune moment, and then extending ourselves when the enemy least expects it, then our force will be severe and irresistible. Isn’t that so?” Becoming all the more convinced, Tametomo at length settled on a plan and commanded, “Rin Tayu, I want you to return secretly to Kakeroma.” He responded, “I should not refuse, but it is not my wish to be separated from you even briefly. Though I thought it might not be necessary, I brought a good deal of rice, and also rough-woven fabric to give to you and the Princess. Also, considering the possibility that the boat might be damaged on rocks, I even included an ax, a saw, a chisel, and nails. I see that there are a lot of large cedars on this island. Having grown up on an island I am quite familiar with boat building, and if I stay here, I would easily be able to produce one battleship by next spring. Please, allow me to stay.” At his courteous request, everyone marveled at the strength of his resolution. Then Tametomo said, “If we keep you here, your wife and children will no doubt be worried and grieved. Why would you make them suffer like that? I’m sure they go to the shore every day anxiously awaiting your return. Go back to Kakeroma immediately and put their minds at ease. On this island there are enchanted peaches [*michitose no momo*] that will provide us with sustenance. We do not desire rice. But if you would favor us, please leave the fabric so that we could use it for winter wear.” While he was thus trying to humor the island chieftain, Kihieji interjected, “Since I am from the western provinces, I know quite a bit about boat building. As long as I have an ax and a saw, even these aged hands could build a boat without anyone’s help. And so even if Mōun’s rebel troops come this way, we’ll be free either to advance or retreat. And next spring even if Rin Tayu does not come to take you elsewhere, our movements would be up to us.” Tametomo was greatly pleased, and said “If Kihieji builds a boat, it will be as if we had wings. Rin Tayu, return quickly to your island, but wait until spring,



the beginning of the third month, to tell the islanders about all these things. Then secretly load into a boat provisions for an army, and row to the western beach of Tomari. When you've heard that I've attacked Ginowa and Urazoi, come quickly to meet me." Rin Tayu finally accepted these orders, and answered, "At any rate, I shall do whatever I can for you." The next day, he took the fabric, ax and saw that he had stored in his boat and handed them to Kiheiji. Then he departed alone over the vast sea and returned to Kakeroma. And so he no longer figures in our account.

Thus as Tametomo and the Princess were remaining on Kowajima and together with Sutemaru and Kiheiji were creating a plan to destroy Mōun, the year came to a close. Though Kiheiji was well on in years, since he had spent much time on an enchanted land, his vigor exceeded that of his younger years, and he soon fashioned a boat out of a single enormous log. Seeing that new sprouts of green were appearing among the withered grasses heralding the arrival of spring, Tametomo and the Princess counted the days that had passed since their arrival on the island, and it came to one hundred. "The time has now come. Let us first of all head

secretly to Chūzan and find out where the Prince is, then covertly look into conditions at the palace. Then when the time is right, we should again attack the castles at Ginowa and Urazoi. Since we have explained this strategy to Rin Tayu, he will have provisions for us at the western beach. When they hear that I have again raised the battle standard, Shōju, Tsuru, Kame, and all surviving troops will rush to join us without being summoned.” Having thus concluded their war council, the four of them donned garments made from the rough-woven fabric, dressing as if they were sulfur merchants, and then again did obeisance before the three shrines. Then taking the three arrows and putting them in quivers of bamboo, then wrapping in tree bark the book on strategy that had been handed down in the Minamoto family, the golden poetry tag, and other objects and stowing these in the bottom of the boat, they determined an auspicious day for departure. The four of them boarded the boat, untied the hawser and, with Kiheiiji at the rudder, set out over the water. The sea was calm that spring day. Looking back at the island, though there was no longer anyone on it, they had spent so much time there that they felt a twinge of sadness at leaving. This being a surreptitious journey, they did not stop at the ports of Naha or Tomari but kept rowing farther to the north and, with Mount Unten as their goal, entered the Taiei River between Nago and Haneji. The very names were felicitous: Mount Unten, “Fate of Heaven,” and Taiei “Great Glory” River. To the south was Nagori Peak, while in the northwest lay Imakijin, meaning “Benevolence has now returned.” These were all auspicious omens pointing to victory.

Abandoning the boat at Taiei River and with their gear on their backs and their satchels slung on their necks, they proceeded through the mountains between Nago and Kaso toward Onnaga Peak. Thinking that they might draw suspicion if the four of them traveled together, Tametomo and Sutemaru went about two leagues ahead of the Princess and Kiheiiji, who stayed far behind. They had agreed that if they took lodging somewhere, they would leave some kind of sign on the eaves, but the entire day that day was spent crossing mountain paths with no human habitation in sight. Thus they did not have to worry about maintaining distance and camped that night under the open sky by Onnaga Peak. The next morning the Princess recalled how once when she was in hiding on that very mountain she happened to meet Sa Kokukitsu, and how led by the loyal spirits of Mō Kokutei and Niigaki she was able to escape mortal danger. And now in the wake of an eight-year dream, she alone had not awakened. Now she had despaired of ever seeing their faces again even in a vision. From that point on, they pursued a southeastern path, entering the *magiri* of Koegu. They came to the stone bridge where Manazuru was slain, and her

falling tears seemed like blossoms on the moss. She came to a standstill, unable to move from the spot, but with Kiheiji's gentle encouragement finally arrived at Kuba, east of the Middle Castle, just as the sun was setting. It was here that Lady Ren took the blade to herself. The oil trees stood as before, a memento of her mother who, like them, had everything squeezed out of her. Her sleeves damp with tears, she saw far off that someone who shared her grief had erected a stupa. In deep sorrow she availed herself of that person's piety and stood before it for a time in silent prayer. Then trying time and again to tear herself away, she finally returned to the shade of the trees where the evening shadows were even darker. A mountain cuckoo as it sought a place to roost—for whom was it crying?

Chapter Sixty

Lighting a lamp, the country woman accommodates her guests,
Borrowing a sword, the woodcutter awaits his wife.

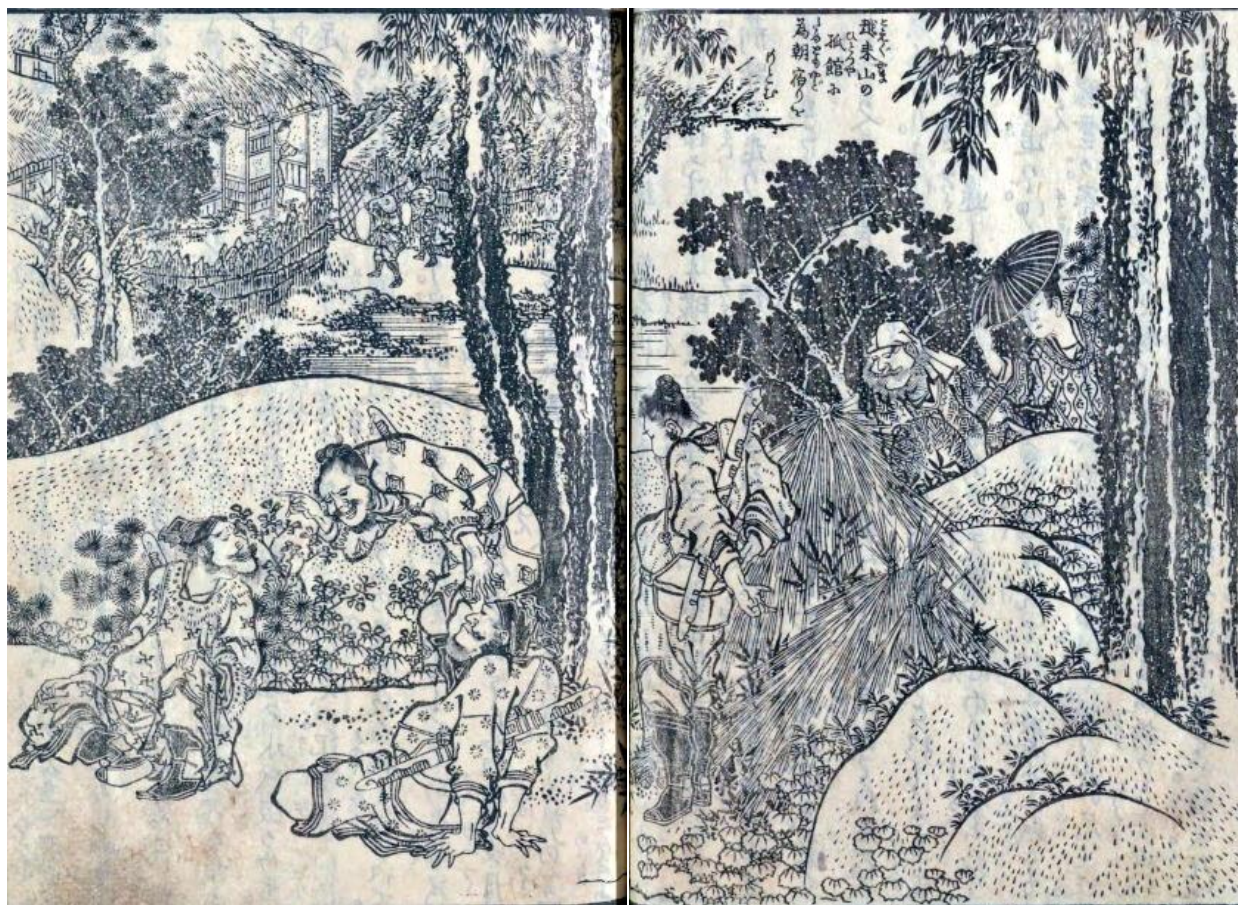
At that same time, as Tametomo and Sutemaru were hurrying along a path deep into the foot of the mountain, night had already fallen. Aside from a single straw-thatched house, there were few signs of human presence. On the hedge, new leaves of ivy were swaying in the wind. The faint glimmer of a lamp inside was visible, and so they approached the half-open sliding door. Stealthily peering inside they saw a woman of humble estate, obviously blind in one eye, weaving cloth from banana fibers. Not much over thirty, she was fair of countenance, an eight or nine out of ten, and had nothing about her that appeared rustic. In the smoke from the unseasoned firewood burning in the fireplace, she looked like a flower surrounded by fog, and her pensive countenance bespoke reminiscence of the past, perhaps of the things that had brought her to straitened circumstances. Or was she avoiding the world in this humble cottage?

Tametomo whispered to Sutemaru, "If we take lodging in a place like this, we won't have to worry about enemies. Shall we address her?" Also peering inside, Sutemaru answered, "Last night bedding down under the stars, I didn't sleep at all, so I can imagine how exhausted mother must be. I do not hesitate at all to stay in a lone dwelling with no neighbors. Let's lodge here tonight." Thus in agreement they pushed the dilapidated door open. Tametomo stepped inside and asked, "We are travelers on this mountain path and night has fallen. Would you be willing to let us spend the night here?" Her hand coming to a stop at her loom, the country woman looked back at them and welcomed them, saying, "Except for wind sighing through pines by the eaves and nightingales singing in the hedge, I never have visitors. It is because of a karmic bond that travelers would seek lodging in a friendless, isolated hut. My husband is away. At the foot of the mountain there is an inn, but it is far away, and as you can see, if it rains it is not only moonlight that leaks in, and we have no way to prevent drafts. As for bedding, we have none but our own, so I could offer you nothing to cover yourselves. But if you don't mind that, you are welcome to stay." At such a show of hospitality, the father and son felt as if they had been given rain gear in a sudden downpour while on the road. Tametomo said, "Of course we do not mind. As long as we have a place to lie down, we don't need bedding because it has been warm lately. A woman has been traveling with us, but she fell behind and will soon catch up. Please accept her also." Then

taking off his sedge hat, he hung it above the door as a sign to the Princess and Kiheiji. Then he and Sutemaru sat down on the veranda and untied their sandals. Drawing water in a bucket bound with wisteria vines, the woman poured it over their feet, then dusting off some shabby, bristled straw mats, invited them saying, "Please, use these." With Sutemaru behind him, Tametomo assumed a seat next to the sunken fireplace. The woman poured hot water into bowls and set it before them. They looked about and saw that the mortar on the wall had fallen off, exposing the frame, and the bark had rotted off the pillars. Though it would seem to be a hunter's house, there were not pelts to be seen. Could it be the hiding place of mountain brigands? They felt they could not let down their guard. Looking at them intently, the woman asked, "Where are you from? And where are you headed? Your manner of speaking isn't like anything I hear around here." Worried that his background might be revealed, Tametomo was careful not to let that show, and replied, "You are quite correct. We are sulfur merchants from Okinokoshima, and having encountered many difficulties we decided to ply our trade in a city, so I set off with wife and child. But we found that conditions here are not calm either. There are checkpoints between each *magiri*, and they don't allow private travel. Planning to connect with an acquaintance in Sannan Province, we got lost on this mountain path, and are most grateful for a night's lodging. What, may I ask, is your husband's occupation? After we have settled in at our destination, we would like to stop by again and pay you for your kindness. May I ask your name?" The woman replied smiling, "As you can see, I spend my days in these mountains seeing little sunlight. My husband is out every day cutting firewood and I weave cloth from banana fibers. We take these things to sell in the village, thereby eking out a meager livelihood. We have no names worthy of mention, and desire no payback. It is truly an uncertain world we live in. The heir of the Tenson line has perished, Lord Tametomo, Lord of Ōzato, raised an army and fought to no avail and then was burned in a conflagration at Shimabukuro, and I hear that the Princess, too, was slain that same day, and the bones left in the ashes show that those two died in vain. But Reverend Sovereign Mōun is still ill at ease, thinking that they might have escaped. And so he has set up checkpoints and has forbidden people to give lodging to travelers. He has promised to elevate to lord anyone who captures or kills Tametomo. And if such a person does not wish to hold office, he will be rewarded with enough money to meet all his needs and wants for his lifetime. Living in the mountains far from the outside world we missed this announcement, but my husband makes frequent trips to the village where he hears reports of what is going on in the capital.

Though fearing later punishment, desiring later reward, whether or not to give lodging to a traveler ... one hears that city people are full of desire but lacking in kindness. My husband looks every bit like a rustic, but is chivalrous in spirit and kindhearted. Even if he were to come back now he would not perversely drive you away, so please feel at ease.” At her words of consolation, Tametomo and Sutemaru exchanged worried glances as they wondered whether she had guessed their identity. But they did not let that show, and only expressed gratitude for her thoughtfulness, then changed the subject with tales of their travels. Fixing her eyes on the sword on Tametomo’s waist, she moved closer to inspect it in the moonlight, muttering “My husband is later than usual. Lately bandits have been causing trouble here and there, and I hear that even city folk are worried. I’m anxious about my husband. Travelers, please wait here for a while. I’m going to run to Hinokisaka and see.” With that she went out on the familiar mountain path alone with only the moon for light.

Watching the woman as she ran out of sight, Sutemaru said in a low voice, “What do you think, father? I find it hard to understand why that one-eyed woman’s reception was so hospitable. She must have guessed who we are. The way she stared at your sword and then suddenly ran off makes me think that she went to tell her husband so that he’ll come and slay us. I think this place is either a lair of mountain brigands or part of a network of Mōun’s spies set up to trap us. Though it is said that mountains are good places to hide from the world, this house is not one where we should linger. Let’s leave quickly before they return.” Nodding in agreement but showing no sign of panic, Tametomo said, “I think so too. But the Princess and Kiheiji are still on the way. Without telling them, even if we hastily make an exit, that woman and her husband have evil designs and if they recruit accomplices and come in pursuit, we would have nowhere to go but into enemy territory. Whether they are mountain brigands who care only about their own advantage or satisfying their desire, or are spies for Mōun, however ferocious they may seem, they are nothing to be afraid of. We’ll just cut them down and leave.” Just then they heard a voice from outside, “This is it!” Sharp of hearing, Sutemaru whispered that it was Kiheiji’s voice and opened the door. The Princess took off her sedge hat and came inside, followed by Kiheiji who likewise took his off and stacked them together along with the one Tametomo had put out as a sign. Sutemaru attended to his mother’s fatigue after her long journey, drawing water and pouring it over her feet then dusting off a mat for her to sit on. Kiheiji also tucked up his kimono and took a seat. The four of them rejoiced in their having made



it through the day in safety. Then the Princess said, “As it was growing dark we picked up our pace and thought only of catching up with you, but ran into unexpected impediments and ended up being late. Even in the bright moonlight I thought it would be difficult to find, but when we saw the sedge had that you had cleverly put out as a sign, we guessed that this must be the place we would lodge.” As if to determine who lived there, Kiheiji peered into the interior of the house and then, moving closer, said to Tametomo, “As we were coming here, we saw several huge men who looked like mountain brigands gathered in the shadow of the trees discussing something. We overheard what they were saying. We didn’t get the full context, but they were talking about taking Tametomo captive and getting a handsome reward. They seemed not to have come to a unanimous decision, but we were worried about both of you. I signaled to the Princess with my eyes, and we ran off quickly along a side path that even woodcutters would be unlikely to use. When we had gone about half a mile on that narrow path overgrown with vines, we ran into a one-eyed woman. That woman looked us over and said, ‘You’re following another party of travelers, aren’t you? This evening two sulfur merchants will be staying at our house. One is

about forty years old and very tall, while the other is a boy. If that sounds familiar to you, a few hundred yards south of here under a large locust tree there is a small house. That is ours.’ Then as she hurried on her way past us, a short splint of wood fell from her breast pocket. As I was about to call her to stop, I saw that ‘一人田土夫婦’ was written on the splint. The Princess also looked at it and said ‘As I consider what’s written here, when the characters 一人 [one person] are combined, they become 大, and when 田土 [paddy soil] are combined, they become 里, so it is 大里夫婦, or ‘the couple from Ōzato,’ referring to Lord Hachirō and me. So they have guessed who we are, and this splint seems to be a tally to communicate with accomplices to come and kill us tonight. Maybe those ruffians we just now saw under the tree are in on this.’ Considering all these factors, I thought we should go after that villainous woman and stop her lest some disaster should befall us, but we had no idea where she went. Rather than try to investigate them, I thought it would be better to inform both of you, so we ran as fast as we could to find the place where you are lodging.” Then he showed them the splint, and whispered to him all they had seen and heard. Sutemaru said with a sigh, “Did you hear that, father, what Kiheiji just said? There can no longer be any doubt. Let’s get out of here before we fall into their trap. We’re in great danger.” But Tametomo only nodded in response to his son’s remonstrations. Then he told the Princess and Kiheiji what the woman had said, and that she had rushed out to see if her husband was coming back. “Sutemaru keeps insisting it’s dangerous to stay here. I, too, am aware of the danger. But if you retreat one step from the enemy, the enemy will advance one step. Whether to advance or retreat is all up to you and the enemy, but it will be difficult in the end to escape their force. If heaven-ordained fate works to our advantage, then we’ll destroy Mōun and the sun will again smile on this people. If my martial fate is exhausted, then it would be difficult to prevail against even these uncouth mountain brigands. A warrior is always prepared to die. I have a plan in mind. Princess, Sutemaru, Kiheiji, you hide behind things for a while. The best thing is to wait until the woman returns with her husband.” A manly man displaying the fearless Japanese spirit could no longer be moved by remonstrations, and so the other three went behind a shabby screen in the back and, clearing away cobwebs, hid themselves. Blowing out the lamp, Tametomo sat alone in the dark.

It was already the middle of the hour of the boar [11:00 p.m.] that night, but there was no sound of a bell, only wind seeping through the chinks and the roar of the stream in the ravine. Suddenly there was the sound of footsteps outside. Then the door opened and the voice of one who was presumably the husband called out “Chitose, Chitose!” several times. Finally groping his way to the hearth, he muttered, “That wife of mine is a heavy sleeper. How did she fall asleep not leaving a single live coal? And it’s still early in the evening.” But the cramped interior of that ramshackle house was to his advantage in finding his way about, and from the corner of a familiar shelf he took down a tinderbox and lit a lamp. In its glow he faced Tametomo. Greatly surprised, he asked, “Aren’t you Lord Hachirō?” “And you are Shōju!” “How can this be?” In utter amazement Shōju dropped the burning splinter on his knee. Quickly brushing it away from his tattered clothing, he backed away somewhat and, straightening his shabby collar, said, “There are some things I should mention first of all. After our forces were defeated last year at Naga River, we didn’t know where you had gone. I made careful inquiries. Some said that you had perished in the conflagration at Shimabukuro, and I too thought that was likely and was very grieved, but I could not take my own life until I had collected your bones. As I was laboring here and there, and day or two later I heard that the Princess had also been slain at Mount Ōzato. Though there was no longer any hope, I entertained thoughts of dying after cutting down Mōun, and not die an unmanly death. I tried to muster my resolve with such thoughts, but with Tsuru and Kame likely slain—and with the few surviving soldiers all scattered—there was no one I could take council with. If I ended up being discovered by the enemy and taken captive, in what life could I ever satisfy my resentment? I determined that the best course would be to go into hiding, lying low in the depths of the mountains in Koegu, living hand to mouth in the shadows of a ravine and waiting for spring. And being reunited with you now, nothing could bring me greater joy.” He completed his account, but Tametomo remained somewhat guarded. “I do not doubt the events you describe, but it is one’s mind that must be trustworthy. If you remained so devoted, then why did you take a wife and use a tally to gather accomplices to come and slay me? That is what I cannot understand.” Without a pause, Shōju answered reproachfully, “My having taking a wife was not out of lust or because I had lost my resolve. As you can see, that woman is blind in one eye, but she resembles my deceased wife Manazuru, not only in her countenance but also in her sincere devotion. And so to take refuge from the world, I have sequestered myself in this place. Also, I have discussed these things with loyalists among the

hunters in these mountains. Though I lack the talent of Zhang Liang or the courageous strength of Canghai Gong,¹ I did have a secret plan once to watch for Mōun's carriage when he set out and strike him down. But I call the gods of Kinmanmon to witness that I am not one who forgets righteousness and allies himself with power. Won't you let me explain myself?" Tametomo laughed mockingly. "There is the common saying 'Proof excels theory.' Everyone, come on out!" At his summon, Sutemaru, Kiheiji, and the princess came out from behind the screen. Facing Shōju, the Princess severely castigated him, saying, "We were unaware that our lodging was the hideout of the Lord of Kochibira. I am not asking for any reassurance, but a while ago we unexpectedly overheard a bunch of ruffians who seemed to be your cohorts gathered beneath a tree discussing secretly how they were going to capture Lord Hachirō. This may sound as if I'm bragging about my own, but Lord Hachirō, having been blessed by the divine aid of the gods of Heaven and Earth, escaped the conflagration at Shimabukuro, and as a couple we fled. Helped by a man from Kakeroma whose boat took us to the shore of Kowajima, there we met Sutemaru and Kiheiji, though we had not known whether they were alive or dead. We waited for the mildness of spring, and then in order to recruit an army once more, traversed various mountains and came to this stream near Koegu, which was once pure but is now turbid, just like your ulterior motives. A tangled rope can be untangled, but there is no way you can talk your way out of this!" Then Kiheiji took out the splint they had picked up and, shoving it in front of Shōju's face and bringing the lamp closer, glared at him saying, "I'm sure you know about his splint. Japan and Ryukyu are different, but over the years you must have heard of Hachirō Tametomo's old retainer Half-mile Stone-throwing Kiheiji. I spent almost ten years on a lonely island protecting and raising this boy. Then after being unexpectedly reunited with my lord, I have crossed over to this land. By chance having picked up your wife's splint, I guess your nefarious plot. '一人田土夫婦' is a code for 'the couple from Ōzato' who are lodging at your house this evening, and this is a tally to communicate that secretly to your accomplices who were plotting under the tree. That explains your wife's behavior. Will you still deny it?" Taking up his fan, Sutemaru added, "From the time I was on Kowajima I heard my parents talk about you, and they considered you very trustworthy, but it turns out that you're a double-dealing traitor. Yesterday's

¹ Zhang Liang (c. 251-189 BCE), was a military strategist and rebel against the Qin dynasty. One of his allies against the Qin emperor was Canghai Gong, also known as Li Canghai, who jumped into the emperor's carriage in an unsuccessful attempt to assassinate him, and committed suicide after his capture.

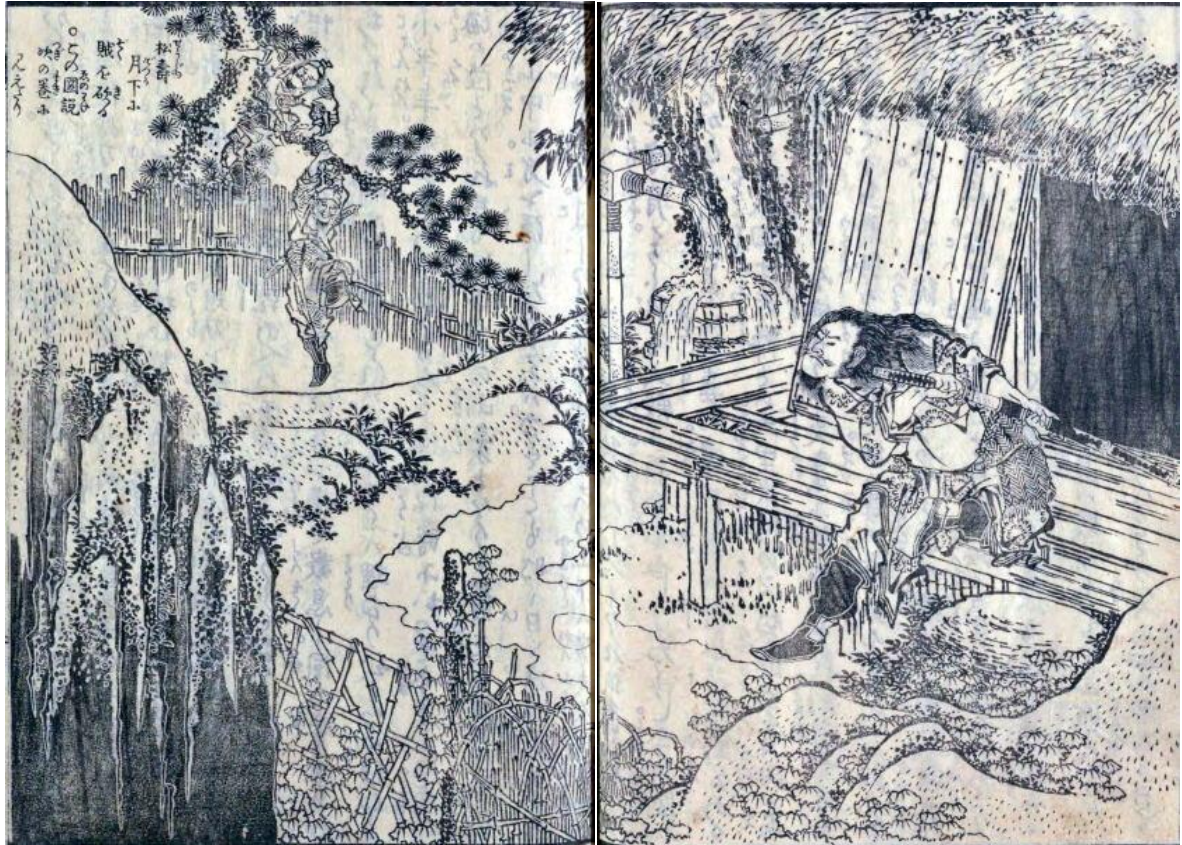
ally is today's enemy. You must have been a mountain brigand at heart, because that's what you've become. And that woman you call your wife—Chitose or whatever her Name is—was eying my father's sword so suspiciously. Go ahead and call your accomplices together. I'll show you how Sutemaru can face an enemy!" With that he cast his fan aside and put his hand on the hilt of his sword. Half-mile Stone-thrower also set his sheathed sword up on the veranda. Seeing their fierceness, Tō Shōju took the dagger out of his belt and, tossing it to Kiheiji, stretched out his neck to await the blade. Seeing that there was no way to clear this false accusation, he would no longer cling to this transient life. But then filled with regret that this shame would outlive him, he raised his head and sighed, saying, "It is only reasonable that you should be suspicious, given the precarious position you are in. I don't really know the intentions of that woman I've been living with these past months, but as for myself, even if the south seas all turned into land, I would never become a mountain brigand in this wretched world and an enemy of my lord, would I? When I took to hiding in these mountains, I spent my days with nothing to do. As I sat among the fallen leaves and reflected on the past—on how Lady Ren committed suicide near Kuba at the base of this mountain and on how my wife Manazuru was slain on the stone bridge at Koegu—I felt that the least I could do would be to commemorate them. Knowing nothing of the use of an ax in these parts, I carved two stupas with my sword and, under cover of night, went to those places to set them up. On my way back I met a one-eyed woman who was returning from the market. She spoke to me, and I asked about her background. She was the daughter of a woodcutter, and both of her parents had died recently, one after another. She lived by herself at the foot of this mountain, and had no relatives on whom she could rely. She lamented, 'Thus clinging to life I cut firewood and weave cloth, and early in the morning while stars are still shining I set out for the village and return to the mountain under moonlight. You can imagine how dreary a life it is.' And her resemblance to my deceased wife beguiled me. We shared shelter from the rain under the same tree, and perhaps we had a karmic bond from another life, but I could not bring myself to abandon her. Thinking of it as a way to hide myself, at first I lied about my background and stayed at her house, and for a few months now we have called each other husband and wife. And so I became a mountaineer in an isolated house far from anyone else, and thought of nothing but concealing myself. So then, is Chitose the daughter of a mountain brigand? Or else a spy for Mōun who, knowing my real identity, is part of a plot to discover where you had gone, Lord Hachirō? Which might it be?" Then he folded his arms and lapsed

into pensive silence, unable to clear the doubts filling his mind. He again picked up the splint and examined it closely, saying with a note of suspicion, “This splint is from among some that I cut a while ago from an aniseed tree when I was out gathering firewood. I whittled them down to shavings and, for Lord Hachirō and the Princess wrote on them, breaking 大里 into 一人田土 so that no one would understand the meaning. Then I floated them down the stream. They are not tallies for gathering cohorts. I kept all of this a secret even from Chitose, so I don’t know why she had one of those splints in her breast pocket. At any rate, I tried to live a righteous life, but have not succeeded. I longed for justice, but have only become your enemy. No matter how I try, I cannot justify having made a pledge to a villainous woman. From the time the land first fell into disorder I followed the teachings of Mō Kokutei. I did not mind the slander of those who flattered Grand Minister Ri Yū. For the sake of the country I was branded as disloyal and unjust and called filthy names. But after the Princess was saved and I became acquainted with Lord Hachirō, the plan was taking shape and Ri Yū was punished with death. But fate turned against us and, defeated by Mōun’s sorcery, I was left all alone until this spring, when I have again met you. If I speak of my joy at that, I also bear much shame. And that is a time when one should die. It can’t be helped.” Then immediately looking about, he reached for a fulling mallet that was leaning on the pillar with the intention of smashing it into his head. Tametomo order “Stop him!” whereupon Sutemaru and Kiehiji each grabbed one of his arms and restrained him, finally taking the mallet from his hands. Feeling even more ashamed, Shōju was unable to raise his head.

Then looking at Shōju and heaving a long sigh, Tametomo reproved him, saying, “Considering the loyal devotion you always demonstrated as Lord of Tochibira, what you have just said must be true. Giving these things careful consideration, I wonder if in this case too Mōun’s sorcery has tricked you in order to have you kill me. Then Chitose, or whatever her name is, is the same sort of being as that seductress Aronia. That’s why she kept eying the sword at my waist. This sword has been treasured by the Minamoto family, and on the evening back in autumn of the second year of Kaō [1170] when I went to Sanuki province and visited the mausoleum of the New Cloistered Emperor, his majesty along with my father, Police Lieutenant Tameyoshi, and my brothers, Lieutenant Guard of the Left Gate Yorikata, Head of Housekeeping Yorinaka, Kamo no Rokurō Tamemune, Gen Shichirō Tamenari, Gen Kurō Kamenaka appeared

to me in a dream and told me how events should unfold in the world.² When I was startled awake by the wind in the pines, I found a precious sword by my side. This all began in the Hōgen era when my father was summoned to the palace for the ceremony of his appointment to the office of Guard of the North Gate and was given manors in Iba in Ōmi province and Aoyagi in Mino province. At the same time he was given the sword Unomaru. This sword has a history. When Retired Emperor Shirakawa made an imperial progress to the Shinsen Garden, on the way he saw cormorants used for fishing and was amazed especially at how one cormorant two or three feet long and noted for its ability would dive over and over again, each time disgorging a fish. But finally it emerged with a gold hilted sword. The ministers were all amazed, and his majesty found it mysterious, saying that the sword must have miraculous power. Hence he named it Unomaru, ‘u’ meaning ‘cormorant,’ and treasured it. Now this Unomaru was passed on to Retired Emperor Toba, then in turn to the New Cloistered Emperor, and then finally to my father. In my dream I saw my father Tameyoshi wearing it over his white-strapped armor. When he drew it the blade glistened against the autumn frost. That he should remember me even after his passing and leave this memento, I can hardly express my gratitude, and it has never left my side. When we faced the tempest at sea and the boat was about to capsize I used it to cut the ropes to the sails. I used it to cut down that seductress Aronia with one stroke. And when I think that it was because of the powers of this sword that I managed to survive the fire at Shimaburukuro, it is something I could never bear to lose. But I shall lend it to you for a while. If Chitose is a product of Mōun’s sorcery—even if she’s like the beast of misfortune or Aronia—how could this miraculous sword not cut her down? Quickly decapitate her and show that your loyalty has not been lost to lust.” The Princess, Sutemaru, and Kiheiji were all deeply impressed with how their good commander was able to respect another’s dignity while at the same time maintaining a firm distinction between good and bad. Unable to restrain tears of gratitude, Tō Shōju said “That you did not execute me when I was suspected of crime, and that you would lend me this precious sword even if only briefly, is much more than I deserve. This evening I shall clear my shame. How glad I will be to subdue a devil!” Then reverentially taking the sword in his left hand, he added, “If Chitose comes back now I shall cut her down, and if any other enemies show up, I’ll

² This is related in chapter twenty-five.



not let one of them get away.” His courage was bolstered by a sense of justice as he looked outside. Then Tametomo said “I hear a sound. She must be coming. You mustn’t have an expression on your face that would make her suspicious. If we’re standing out here, the plan could go awry, so we must hide quickly!” His reflection disappeared from the water conduit by the gate. Tametomo first of all hid Sutemaru, the Princess and Kiheiji, then slipped behind the screen himself. They waited anxiously, wondering “Has she come yet?” as they peeked through the chinks.

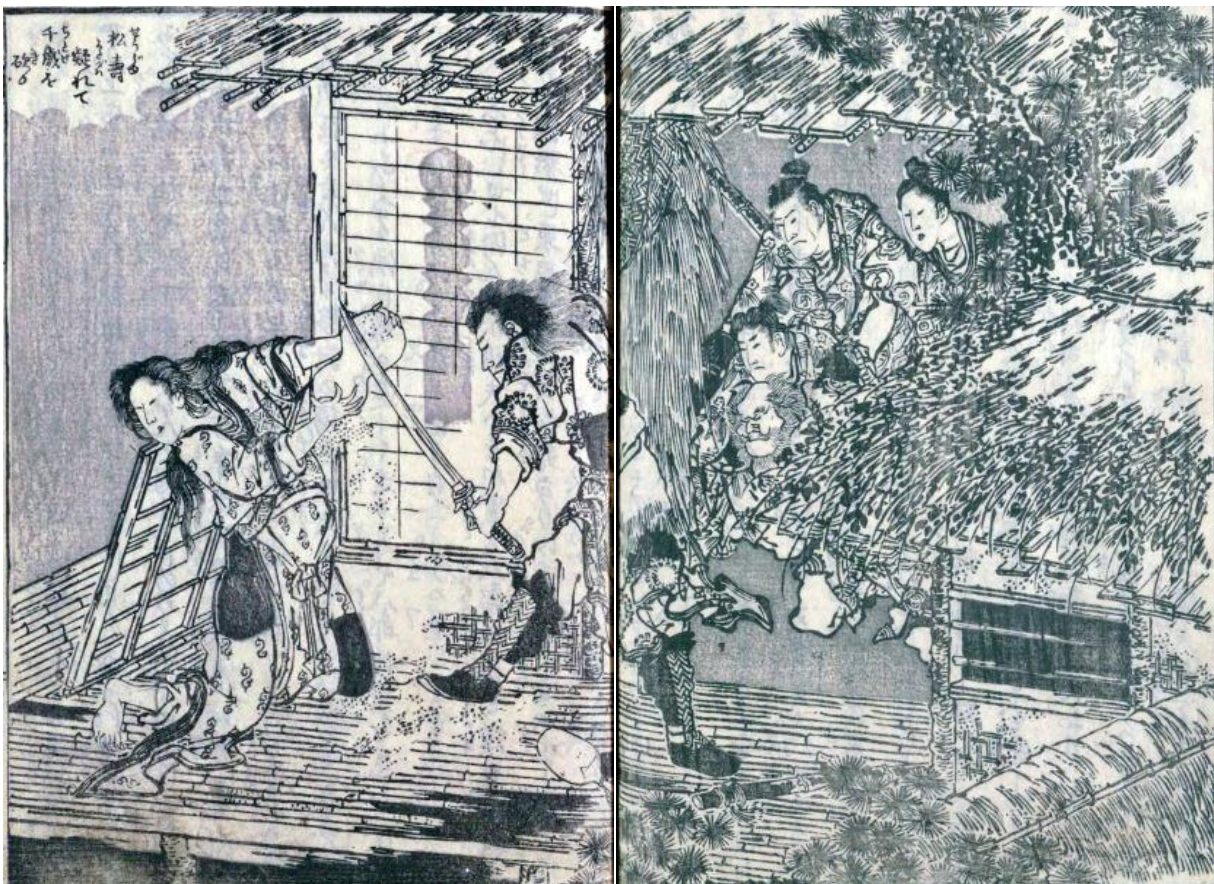
Chapter Sixty-One

Smashing down the hedge, three villains try to kill Lord Gen,
Drenching it in tears, Tametomo buries the stupa.

Suspicion somehow engenders phantoms.¹ When you suspect something you'll see something, and if you invite, something will always come. Thus Shōju was suspected by Tametomo and his son and could give no answer except that he became involved with Chitose because of her resemblance to his deceased wife. But this casual union had changed from a bond to enmity, pitching his mind into a state of restlessness. When she returned, for the sake of his lord he would cut her down with a single stroke of the sword to avert future disaster. As he waited by the slightly open door with the hilt of the precious sword Unomaru ready to be drawn from its sheath, the clouds had dispersed revealing a clear moon, and as the night deepened there was only the insistent hooting of an owl by the eaves in this desolate place in the depths of the mountains. Just then there was a cracking sound as someone broke through the hedge by the gate and stole inside. Looking from a distance, Shōju nodded to himself thinking "Ah, a villain," and watched breathlessly. Unaware of that, the villain slipped in and, slithering like a snake through the grass or staying low like a turtle coming out of water, he looked left and right then again lowered his head and crawled. Putting his hands on the veranda, he raised his head like a bamboo shoot in spring. As he was about to enter, Shōju sprang forth and, wielding his sword as he grabbed the villain's topknot, cut off his head. Then inspecting it in the moonlight, Shōju saw that it was none other than the hunter Shinpei who lived at the foot of the mountain. "So, it was you who were in on Chitose's plot to sneak in here and kill the Lord of Ōzato. What a despicable brute!" As he kicked the corpse over, something tumbled out of its breast pocket. Wondering what it could be, Shōju picked it up. It was a signal whistle. That meant his accomplices were close by. When the Princess came here accompanied by Kiheiji and overheard a bunch of country ruffians sitting under a tree planning to kill or capture Tametomo, it must have been this party. And the thought crossed the back of Shōju's mind that it was more plain than ever that Chitose was in on the plot. Hiding the sword behind his back, he blew the whistle, whereupon he heard a voice from without saying, "No mistake, that's the signal!" Then the accomplices Kyūma

¹ A phrase from *Liezi*.

and Habusō slipped through the breach in the hedge and, thinking that Shōju standing on the veranda was Shinpei, approached and looked inside, asking “Hey, where’s Tametomo sleeping? What’s the situation?” Then with a swift blow, Shōju struck Habusō’s stretched out neck. The villain fell over with a thud. Greatly alarmed, Kyūme turned around to flee, but Shōju pierced him through the back with a sharp bamboo lance. He was added to the corpses whose blood was staining the garden like out-of-season maple leaves. Having finished off these three villains, Shōju hoped that Chitose would return soon. If he failed to strike down that wicked woman, he would not succeed in proving his loyalty to his lord. Such thoughts left him feeling uneasy as he wiped the blade of the sword with the lining of his robe. Just as he was returning it to its sheath he heard footsteps outside, and as she opened the door and entered, Chitose called out, “My husband, are you back?” Shōju was about to jump at her suddenly, but thought that would only set her running, and instead stepped back and hid in the shadows to try to lure her closer, all the time sharpening his blade in his mind. Unaware of his malicious feelings, her mind was fixed more on expectations of the next day than on what appeared in the dim lamplight. With a large gourd holding three measures hanging from her straw belt, she muttered to herself as she pulled



the door open, “With travelers lodging here, I couldn’t scrounge together enough for us and them, so I bought some millet to cook in the morning and got home later than I expected. Everyone must be asleep.” Then she saw a blade flash like lightning and crying “Ah!” jumped back, using the gourd to ward off repeated strikes, its contents of millet spilling all over her. “You’ve lost your mind! If I’ve done something wrong, I’ll apologize. Though never officially married, we’ve been together almost half a year and have never argued or been angry at each other. What rancor has made you so cruel?” Glaring at her, he raged and reviled her, saying “Ask your own heart what evil possesses you. The heads of the men you conspired with earlier this evening—Shinpei, Kyūma, and Habusō—are no longer on their shoulders. Didn’t you see them lying over there?” Then he began striking again. The gourd finally broke into pieces, and with no other defense she tried to flee, but stepped on the hem of her robe and fell down. Now getting up now falling, she dodged the blows, her hair becoming disheveled. Finally slashed from her right shoulder down to her breast, she fell with a thud.

Tametomo and Kiheiji, who had been watching all of this, emerged from behind the screen followed by the Princess and Sutemaru, who seated themselves to the side. Facing Shōju, Tametomo said, “Your words and deeds match perfectly. The loyalty of the Lord of Tochibira is laudable and beyond any doubt. You cut down the villains and were not diverted by bonds of lust. With a hand well practiced in swordsmanship you made an end of Chitose, showing both courage and a sense of justice. I was looking closely from behind the screen. Though the lamp was bright, she cast no shadow against the *shoji*. That means she was a creation of Mōun’s sorcery, sent to bewitch you and have you kill me. It appears to have been an intricate plot. Examine the corpse.” Taking a pine resin light, Shōju held it up and they all saw that where the corpse had been there was now only a stupa made of cedar on which could be seen the slanted mark of a cut by a sword. “What is this?” They all marveled as they looked closer. Shōju turned the stupa over and knitted his brows, saying “This is the stupa I secretly erected by the stone bridge at Koegu for the salvation of my deceased wife Manazuru. I didn’t want anyone to know who it was for, so I didn’t inscribe her name, but I could never forget the knot in the wood near the top. So then, Chitose was the spirit of Manazuru. If she were a spirit of my dead wife and had come to serve her husband who was wandering on a mountain path, she would not have conspired with villains to have them slay you and the Princess. Or is this also Mōun’s sorcery? Or what? It’s all so strange.” Again perplexed, he stood the stupa up commemorating his

deceased wife, looking at it from left and right, but his doubts were not assuaged. Sighing, the Princess said, “Passing by the stone bridge at Koegu or the mountain shadows of Kuba, where Lady Ren and Manazuru were slain, though we saw that stupas had been erected, we thought it was likely the pious work of some unrelated person. And even after hearing that you were the one who had made them, we did not perceive the mystery behind them and suspected you, which was very sinful of us.” Just then, several hunters appeared at Shōju’s gate with two ruffians in tow bound with ropes. They all knelt, and one of them said, “You must be Lord Hachirō and the Princess. We are hunters, named Kōkitsu, Otsuyu, Heiretsu, and Teienzu. We did not know that the master of this house was Tō Shōju of Kochibira, but we have suffered greatly under the oppression of Mōun and, hardly able to eke out a living, have sorely missed the benevolence and virtue of Hachirō and the Princess. Having hoped to find you, a company of us hunters and woodcutters had banded together. This evening, the one-eyed woman who lived here came rushing to us, announcing joyfully, ‘Lord Hachirō is alive and well and, together with his wife and son, are lodging at my house. And there is no need to hide it any longer: my husband, who as a woodcutter has concealed himself from the world, is in reality Lord Shōju of Tochibira who together with Lord Hachirō slew the Grand Minister Ri Yū. If you want to put things back on course, then quickly go and make your intentions known to serve him. Now is the time for you to make names for yourself and benefit your families.’ And so we called everyone together and told them of the situation, but the five hunters Shinpei, Kyūma, Habusō, Bishōhachi, and Shindaishichi did not go along. They left halfway through her statement and we didn’t see where they went. We were worried that they might report us to the authorities, so we delayed coming here and went to hunt them down. We caught up with Bishōhachi and Shindaishichi at Hinoki Slope and tied them up. When we interrogated them under torture, they were unable to endure the pain and tearfully apologized, saying, ‘Five of us secretly conspired to kill Tametomo and take the Princess captive. Shinpei, Habusō, and Kyūmu headed for the house where they were staying, while we two set out for Koegu to report it to officials there. But suddenly we heard Chitose’s voice from behind saying that if our hearts had become evil and we harbored enmity toward the benevolent and just commander, then we would meet with an ignominious death before the morrow, and that Shinpei, Kyūma, and Habusō had already been struck down by her husband. Then our hands and feet became paralyzed so that we were unable to move even one step, and were like logs planted upright in the ground. Now that we think about it, we see that we

succumbed to greed. Will Heaven's punishment come swiftly for having plotted against the life of the great commander who possesses the three virtues of wisdom, benevolence, and courage?' Since they were in such a hurry to catch up with Shinpei and the rest, we have brought them here." At the conclusion of their courteous introduction, they all stood in a line. Upon hearing this, Tametomo and his party all looked at each other and heaved a sigh, as if to say "So then, Chitose was not a product of Mōun's sorcery, but was the spirit of the departed Manazuru who, having possessed the stupa, came to serve her husband in all faithfulness, even more than when she was alive. And yet falling under suspicion, she was assaulted and slain by her husband. How she must have resented his cruelty! Of those in Japan who have perished because of false accusation, few could match her virtue, which could be a model for all women. What kind of karmic retribution will there be for this?" Even if such thoughts were put into words, there was nothing they could do about it. After some time, Tametomo beckoned the hunters to come closer and said, "If you had come a bit earlier, Chitose would not have been killed. Though she is a resident of the underworld, she was castigated as a traitorous woman and came under her husband's blade in spite of her loyal devotion. This was all my fault." Then he described what had happened, how Shinpei, Kyūma, and Habusō had sneaked in and had been cut down by Shōju, about how Chitose was the spirit of Shōju's former wife Manazuru, and all other details. When he showed them the stupa that had been cut but the sword, the hunters were amazed, feeling both wonder and grief, and shedding tears of sympathy. One of them, Kōkitsu, came forth and said sniveling, "Myōbu Manazuru was very bold in spirit. I had heard that when the Princess fled from the Middle Castle, on the stone bridge at Koegu Manazuru fended off a bunch of young ruffians but was finally slain, and that she is remembered both for her qualities and her charm, but I never heard that she was one-eyed. It's a very unusual thing in this world for one who has died to appear phantom-like to console her bereaved husband's sorrow, but I don't understand why she called herself 'Chitose,' and why she was blind in one eye." Responding to his doubts, Sutemaru pointed at the stupa and explained, "Anciently there was also one such case. There was a stupa whose top five rings were made to imitate the five limbs,² but there was a knot in the wood, and so she became one-eyed." As he gathered up the scattered millet, Tō

² That is, the arms, the legs, and the head.

Shōju added, “In Handan the man spent fifty years in his dream,³ but Manazuru was already dead when she woke up, and she left the meal of millet unprepared. Inspired by the thousand-year lifespan of a crane, she called herself ‘Chitose,’ meaning ‘a thousand years,’ though her life was short in the guise she had assumed. She was aloof about sleeping together, but I wonder why she did not tell me—even in a dream—that she knew I was Shōju. Though we lived in the same house, I had no idea that she was my former wife, and so I reviled her as a traitorous woman who had allied herself with rogues and in fierce resentment attacked her, and fearing the miraculous powers of this sword she could not maintain her shadow self. Now all that is left is this stupa without a proper inscription, and nothing else. When this body consisting of the four elements is destroyed, all that remains is the void that it always was. But I shall never be able to lift my face toward your sincerity even after your demise.” Seeing his tearless grief, Sutemaru was even more moved and said in lamentation, “Being young and shallow of understanding, I foolishly misjudge people. Though I thought it was for the sake of my parents that I held you in suspicion, I am deeply ashamed of myself. But my regret is no compensation.” Blinking back tears, Kiheiji apologized, saying “The splint she dropped on which was written ‘一人田土’ was meant to indicate where we were staying, but I was the one who misinterpreted it. Young master, you do not need to apologize. It was all the mistake of this old man.” But no apologies would bring her spirit back. In the moonlit night, even the crows had left the treetops. Looking up at the sky as if its silence bespoke the transitoriness of things, the Princess said, “As I came this way again it was painful to think how wretched her life had been. When she was alive she had spent seven years like the copper pheasant, never sharing a bed with her husband.⁴ And after her death and having pledged her troth anew, her affection like the dew on the grass of the field to which she returned, a reluctant farewell. If her spirit has not yet left this land, how I wish she could again appear and be reunited with her husband.” Thinking himself unworthy of such sentiments, Shōju quickly assumed a formal posture and respectfully reproved her, saying “No matter how much we grieve for Manazuru, it will be of no use. Since she has already demonstrated her loyal devotion to such a degree, it is certainly not the wish of her departed spirit that she be lamented.

³ In Tang Xianzu’s (1550-1616) play *Handan ji*, the official Lu Sheng stayed at an inn in Handan, and while his meal of millet was cooking, had a dream in which he saw himself in a successful fifty-year career, and die in his dream as he woke up. His meal of millet was still cooking.

⁴ It was said that male and female copper pheasants (*yamadori*) spent nights on separate peaks.

As they say, ‘Even the walls have ears.’ We’re vulnerable here to being overheard.” Then he returned the sword Unomaru, whereupon Tametomo said, “The virtue of a sword is that it guards its owner and always follows his intentions. Therefore one endowed with wisdom, benevolence, and courage will cut down his enemies, but one who is only full of suspicion will cut down his allies. In honor of this couple—and in light of this evening’s events in order to prevent the same thing from happening again—instead of ‘Unomaru’ we should call this the ‘Sword of Manazuru.’ It has been mentioned that this is truly Japan’s version of the ‘Blood-smeared Stupa,’ where the old woman escaped disaster because of her simply honesty,⁵ but now Manazuru’s stupa is smeared with blood because of my false suspicions of a virtuous woman. My foolish error in this case cannot be compared with the simple honesty of the old woman in the tale, but we ought to inter this stupa in place of a corpse beside the mountain path. I shall send it off myself.” Then he went out onto the veranda and, facing Kōkitsu, Otsuyu, and the others, said, “Your intentions are very laudable. I would very much like to have you accompany me right away, but if our company is too numerous at this point, it would rather be difficult strategically. But when you hear that I’ve raised the battle standard, come immediately. As for Bishōhachi and Shindaishichi, they should be spared as a memorial to Manazuru. Even if they had plotted to do so, could they ever have slain Tametomo? If they want ill-gotten wealth, then they can go report this to Mōun and come back here acting as guides to the rebel army.” Then he drew his sword and cut their bonds. The two miscreants kowtowed several times before him and apologized, saying, “We have acknowledged our guilt and will withdraw to some place or other. Please use us as guides tomorrow on the mountain path.”

Then Tametomo, along with the Princess and Sutemaru, hurriedly left the house to conduct the burial in hopes of expiating their sin and sending her off to paradise. Kiheiji carried the stupa, and Shōju, having outlived his young wife, brushed the dew off his sleeve as the night deepened like his obligation to his commander. He prayed for the eternal bliss of his departed wife who, years after her death was to be cremated and buried here with no coffin on the plain of

⁵ According to a Chinese folk tale, appearing as early as in the second century BCE *Huainanzi*, an old woman ascended a mountain daily to visit a stupa, believing that if blood ever appeared on it, the mountain would crumble and turn into an ocean. Some villagers tricked her by pouring blood on it. She was alarmed and escaped with her family. The villagers laughed at her, but were soon buried by the collapsing mountain. This tale also appears in *Uji shūi monogatari*.

cypress trees, the smoke from her pyre mixing with clouds on the peaks. She was originally given a water burial,⁶ but now will have a grave. Their sharing of it will be told in a later chapter.

⁶ See chapter forty-one.

Chapter Sixty-Two

On Mount Kusuku, Tsuru observes the enemy,
At the Tenson Shrine, Kumagimi makes an offering of heads.

Even if a screen is tattered, its frame remains. Even if a loyal retainer is haggard, his resolution does not change. At the defeat of their army at Naga River, the brothers Tsuru and Kame barely managed to fight their way out of the siege, and when they inquired about the fate of their commander, they heard that Tametomo had been burned in the conflagration at Shimabukuro, that Ōzato Castle had been taken, and that the Princess had already been slain. Though they were unable to restrain tears of rage, they resolved that as long as they had breath, they would hunt down Kumagimi and avenge the death of their mother Niigaki, then steal into the palace and await Mōun's appearance, slaying him even if they themselves were to end up being killed, thus fulfilling their obligation to both their sovereign and their father. To that end they hid themselves on Kasogatake Peak, carrying arrows and short bows to hunt wild birds and animals, thereby eking out a precarious existence. And so the year came to an end. One day in the middle of the third month Tsuru said, "Brother, although we have miraculously survived and hidden ourselves in the depths of these mountains so that the enemy is unaware of our existence, we have no way to meet with allies. Out of our army of over a thousand soldiers, it is unlikely that every single one of them was killed. There must be some who, like us, survived and are waiting for an opportune time. Those of us who live hidden far away from society have no connections through which to get news about the palace. It occurs to me that on Mount Kusuku in Mawashi (a *magiri* in Chūzan province) there is a peak called Ryōgatake, and though it is a tall peak, densely forested and without much human traffic, it is not far from the palace. It would be an excellent hiding place for us. You go there through the eastern mountain path, and I'll take the western route from Mount Yomudani along the inlet, and then we'll meet up on the mountain. Whatever you do, don't take shortcuts by going along well-traveled roads and highways where there are checkpoints between every *magiri*. If you go along pathless ways where even a pheasant's cry in the grass would not attract a hunter's attention, then you won't face danger, even as many days pass. Just endure everything, remembering that it is all out of filial devotion." Consenting to this admonition, Kame said "I accept your command. But I worry that although the western route is close, there are many places along the inlet where people gather let's go

together along the eastern route.” But Tsuru shook his head. “If we were to go together on the same route and the enemy became aware of us, how would we escape? It seems you’re not thinking clearly. The western route does go along the shore, but it is lined with many mountains: Yomudani, Kitatani, Tomari, and Mount Shitsufū. You don’t need to worry about me. Let’s be off!” Unable to retort, Kame pledged to reunite with his brother later, and the two parted ways.

Now Kasogatake Peak is south of Nagogatake Peak, and is in Sanboku Province. It is far from Mount Kusuku, more than twenty leagues. In order to travel undercover, taking paths through the deep mountains, it took longer than anticipated, and in the evening of the twentieth day of the third month Kame finally climbed to the top of Mount Kusuku. Exhausted from the trip and arriving as the sun was setting, he was not able to look for his brother. Thinking to take shelter under a tree somewhere, he went a slight distance down the ravine in front of him and found an old deer shed, thatched with eulalia and probably used by hunters in the summer to attract game with torches. Kame was delighted to have found lodging and, parting the mat that served as a door and entering, lay down using a hollow log as a pillow.

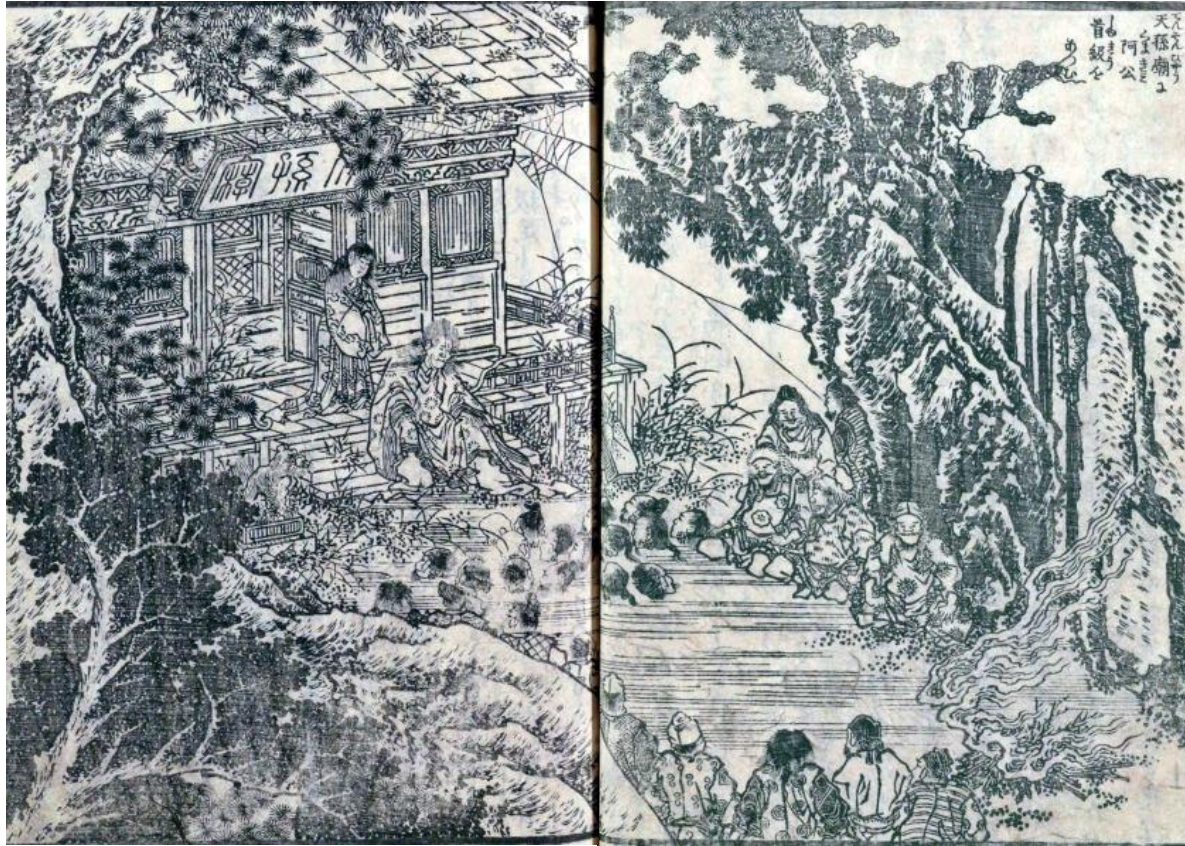
Tsuru, having taken the shorter western route, arrived two days ahead of Kame. He climbed Mount Kusuku, winding his way through deep ravines with no distinct path through dense growth. He wandered about for a day or two, but did not meet Kame. Thick mists arose from the ravines on this mountain and there were not even many birds, so though he was equipped to hunt, he was not able to shoot anything, and though there were many blossoming plants, there was no fruit. He was famished. Looking down deep into a ravine, he saw a thatched hut. He thought it strange that anyone should live in such a place deep in the mountains. Climbing down with the aid of wisteria vines and setting his feet on the tips of crags, he finally managed to reach the place. When he stood at the gate and requested lodging, a boy of about eight years came running out, acting quite like a grown up. Giving Tsuru a careful look, he said “How did you come here? This place is removed from the world and is not suited for human relations. If you lodged here unknowingly, you would be killed on the spot. Fortunately for you, the head of the house is out right now. Go away quickly!” Tsuru found it very suspicious that in a remote mountain hut a boy of refined speech should be home alone, and thought this must be Jirō-Gorō, a servant to a mountain deity. But if out of fear for his life he were to run away, how would he explain that to his brother? Then he recalled the obligation he had to avenge his father, and realized that it would be unfilial of him to approach danger. He again said to the boy, “I’ll

seek lodging, then, under a tree somewhere. I have wandered lost in this mountain for two days now, and have had nothing to eat. If you would give me something, I'll never forget your kindness." The boy nodded and brought out two fistfuls of beechnuts. "We have none of the five grains in this place. I'll give you these." Tsuru accepted them with pleasure, putting them in the provisions bag on his waist. As he climbed back up out of the ravine, he thought of how the features of the boy he had just met seemed somehow noble. And his age would be the same as that of the prince whom Kumagimi had stolen. Then was that hut her hideout? It was foolish of him to have caught on so slowly. He ought to go back and wait for the head of the house to return. Having resolved to do so, he nodded to himself. When he made it back to the bottom of the ravine the day was coming to a close but the moon was not yet out. As it turned out, he was lost, and though he wandered about, the hut was not to be found. Feeling ever more frantic, he looked left and right. Of course, in a place like that there was no one to ask. After running to and fro, stumbling over rocks and scratching his legs on brambles, he was exhausted and sat down on a tree stump. At length the full moon appeared from behind the peak, illuminating everything as if it were midday and revealing an ancient shrine in front of him. Its pillars were leaning, its tiles had fallen, and mistletoe was growing on its eaves. Its guardian lion-dogs were tipped over, the paint on the wooden statues of guardian deities had peeled off, giving them the appearance of hungry ghosts, and the hanging carving of a fish was bedecked with owl droppings. Cobwebs were draped over everything. But the framed golden characters on the lintel stood out in the moonlight: "Tenson Shrine." Tsuru stood up at once and went closer, saying to himself, "Then this shrine is the Tenson Shrine I've heard of. This is the ancestral shrine of our land, but because of traitorous villains the country has fallen and rites have not been performed here. It has become dilapidated, the dwelling of foxes and badgers. During times of peace, we brothers ought to have visited here once when we were small, but we were faced early on with countrywide disaster and were not able to visit this place. How fortunate that I have unexpectedly come here and can worship." Parting his way through tall grass, he cleansed his hands in pure water and, ascending the dilapidated stairs, prostrated himself and prayed, "Though this is the latter, degenerate age, if divine power has not yet abated, please have mercy on the filial devotion of this lowly retainer and lead me to the hideout of my mother's enemy, Kumagimi, that I may accomplish my purpose. Then may I return the Prince safely to Tametomo and the Princess as they have long desired. And may I destroy Mōun and restore the land, according to divine, protective aid." After

a long and fervid prayer he raised his head and decided to spend the night in the shrine and seek out the hut early in the morning. With that he stood up and put his hand on the door, attempting to open it and go inside, but the pillars were leaning and no matter how hard he tried, it would not open. Since it could not be helped, he seated himself beneath the eaves and took out the beechnuts that the boy had given him. He was so famished that the taste was indescribably good. He thought of his brother who was enduring such hardships, and hoped that he would arrive quickly and safely. As he gazed at the sky, it clouded over, concealing the light of the moon and suddenly pitching everything into darkness.

Just then, the lights of many torches appeared, approaching the shrine. Seeing that from a distance, Tsuru could not understand why so many people would be assembling here in the middle of the night on an uninhabited mountain. How sad it would be if the ancestral shrine of the land had become a den of mountain brigands. Thinking that he should hide and see what might happen, he looked about. The shrine door would not open, so it offered no place to conceal himself. He was unable to think of anything until he looked up at the framed characters above the entrance. Holding his bowstring with his mouth he stepped on the decaying latticework for support, then climbed up using the bell rope and hid himself on the beam behind the frame. As the light of the torches grew closer, he saw fifty or sixty rough-looking men wearing black robes and black hoods, with gauntlets of woven bamboo and leggings made of tree bark. They were also carrying long swords. Their left hands held their torches high while their right hands carried heads. They gathered in front of the shrine where they tossed their torches together to make a bonfire, casting much light all around under the dark, cloudy sky and revealing the features of the men down to the pores of their skin. Then they arranged themselves into two rows. One of them, stepping forth in front of the shrine and peering into the hollow of an enormous tree, spoke, "Has your majesty come? We are here bearing the offering as you commanded. Please come out." Then there emerged from the hollow a woman seventy or eighty years of age, her disheveled hair snow white, wearing a half-coat of Japanese brocade and dark blue *hakama*. Leading an eight year-old boy by the hand, she proceeded quietly to the stairs, setting the boy down on the top while she took a seat on the middle step. Her countenance as she surveyed the assembly was both horrifying and powerful. Viewing the scene from behind the frame, Tsuru was both amazed and overjoyed. The boy was none other than the one who had given him the beechnuts at the hut in the ravine. And the old woman was without a doubt Kumagimi, his

mother's mortal enemy. Tsuru tried to calm the agitation in his heart as he wondered what to do. The boy, then, was the Prince whom Kumagimi had stolen away. He seemed even more noble than when Tsuru had met him outside the hut. Tsuru deeply regretted having walked away from the hut after only a brief and perfunctory exchange with the boy. Thus a divine spirit had mercy on him and had led him here this evening, where he had his mother's mortal enemy right below. He should kill his enemy with a single arrow and then pledge his fealty to the Prince, and if he failed to do so, then he would not have fulfilled his mission here. And so fitting an arrow into his bow he was about to pull the string when the thought occurred to him: even if he killed Kumagimi, what about the scores of ruffians present? They would slay him in short order, and then who would pledge fealty to the Prince? Not only that, but his brother was not present. If Kame heard the Tsuru had killed their enemy by himself, he would feel even more disgruntled. It would be like aiming at a rat and breaking pots.¹ He had already discovered her hideout and observed her manners, and so he reproved himself for considering a rash action and just continued to watch silently. Unaware of him, Kumagimi looked over those assembled and asked, "Did you do as I ordered and get enough offerings, lacking none? Who's here tonight?" The men



¹ This expression is cited in chapter thirty-three, note 18. It appears again in chapter forty-nine.

all bowed their heads and one answered, “Yes, we have. Including Tō Ki of Kuniba, Nan Kitsu of Matsukawa, Tei Zō of Yosa, Kō E of Yasusato, Hei Ha of Tsukayama, Gi Su of Nakaima, and An Ketsu of Hohakura, sixty-one are here, and we have taken all the heads you ordered and have brought them here on time. Please accept them.” Then holding the severed heads by their topknots, the men lined them up at the foot of the stairs. After counting them as she nodded her chin, Kumagimi reprimanded them, saying “I ordered you to take eighty-one heads, so how is it that one is missing? How hopeless you all are! You all have balls, but you’re a bunch of lazy fools.” They all bowed their heads again, and one of them said respectfully, “For four or five days now, every night we have wandered about the village of Mawashi, even as far as the Naga River, but Mōun has set up check points all over the place to stop people from traveling at night, so there are few people on the road. It is not because of idleness that we are one head short of eight-one. If you will allow us another day or two, we can get that number up to a hundred. We beg your indulgence.” Then speaking in a very adult manner, the Prince said, “Kumagimi, I am pleased with your intentions to inform me of the trials and tribulations of the world over these three years, but even if you offer the heads of innocent people, will the ancestral deities really accept them? I want you to end this evening’s services.” But she shook her head. “What precocious things you say! I hear that in Japan there is a rite in which more than seventy boars’ heads are offered. And as training for fierceness as warriors, samurai offer severed heads at shrines throughout the country. Today’s offerings are much the same, and may be called the ‘Ginseng Ritual.’ Now 17,790 years have passed since the Tenson ancestor first descended to this mountain, and you, Prince, are the twenty-sixth generation. Though you have been forced by a villainous sorcerer to retreat into the forests, except for you the legitimate Tenson line has been extinguished. At this time if your majesty will join with retainers in prayer, will there not be some miracle? This Mount Kusuku expresses the solemnity of the Tenson family, and when you think that it is also called Ryōgatake, or ‘Spirit Peak,’ it is very awe-inspiring. Some time ago, a castaway from Japan, one Hachirō Tametomo, cajoled that crazy Princess Nei into marrying him, and marshalling his power slew Ri Yū. When he made an attempt on your life I saved you from certain death, and for these three years with the help of the ancestral deities have kept you safe. And there was no limit to that Tametomo’s greed. He tried to destroy Mōun and bring all three provinces under his control, but ended up being burned to death at Shimabukuro, and the Princess was also killed that day, putting an end to that reckless would-be warrior. I’ve gotten

reports that all the followers of that busybody Shōju were killed. That was all Heaven's punishment. But those who remembered their debt to their country and had a sense of honor were grieved by the change in government and fled to the forests. As you can see, though, without even being recruited they follow your majesty. And so we must not wait another three years to destroy Mōun. Please put your mind at ease." He nodded, and said with tears in his eyes, "I understand what you're saying, but it pains me to hear that my sister the Princess was slain on Mount Ōzato, and I feel that the world is indeed a dreary place. And if the rumors are true that even in Japan Tametomo was a peerless brave commander, both loyal and just, then how could his retainers Shōju, Tsuru, and Kame be the same sort of people as Mōun? It is indeed regrettable if all of them were slain." Her voice agitated, Kumagimi tried to humor him, saying "Your majesty may be very young, but ought you to feel pity for such enemies as the Princess and Tametomo? Fights among siblings over inheritance of a throne are common in Japan and in China's ancient history. That Tametomo and his crowd were smitten by Mōun illustrates the Japanese folk saying 'Enlisting the god of plagues to destroy an enemy.' Don't speak such rubbish." Then facing the men, she urged them on, saying "No matter how long you just sit there, the missing offerings won't just spring up out of the ground. From my hiding place in Tachinoki Ravine to this place I have dug a tunnel and have visited the shrine every night. Today is the hundredth day and I had vowed to make the offering. But since the number is insufficient, I don't feel good about it. While we're talking about it it's getting late. Hurry up and go get another head and bring it back here. If you dawdle, I'll take your heads and use them for offering. Get moving!" They all shouted their assent and, lighting torches from the bonfire, all rushed away down the southward path. Just then a passing shower accompanied by thunder and lightning made the stream swell. The sound was like the battle cry of Asura warriors. Embracing the Prince on the stairs, Kumagimi waited impatiently for the men to return.

Seeing that the men had run off, Tsuru was pleased, thinking that now would be the time to kill Kumagimi. If he missed this opportunity, he might not have another chance. Rolling up his sleeves he was about to jump down, but the rain had doused the bonfire, plunging everything into pitch darkness. If when striking Kumagimi he ended up injuring the Prince, that would be neither loyal nor filial. He desperately hoped that the rain would clear and the moon would come out, but the darkness only deepened, leaving him hesitantly grasping the hilt of his sword.

Chapter Sixty-Three

Saving his brother, he recognizes his grandmother under the crescent moon,
Surmising the cause and considering the result, the role of a dagger.

After a while the rain let up and the clouds thinned out. Thinking that the moon might appear and that the scene would become bright, Tsuru was secretly pleased, but if the mountain men came back, regret would be too late. Just as he had decided to announce himself and slay her, the light of two or three torches appeared coming up the mountain accompanied by the boisterous voices of the men. Then three of them came running breathlessly, holding in the air a captive traveler by his arms and legs. Hurriedly setting the prince down, Kumagimi descended to the middle step and said, "Let's see, is it Hei Ha of Tsukayama, Gi Su of Nakai, and An Ketsu of Kohakura who have come back? You did great work in short time. You deserve praise! Where did you take this guy captive?" Letting him down with a thud, they answered, "In this mountain where no one is out even in daytime we thought we'd never catch anyone, but we could not very well disregard your command, so we split up into eight groups. When the three of us wandered past a thatched hut a little farther down the mountain, we heard the sound of snoring inside. When we lifted our torches and looked inside we found this young guy sound asleep and oblivious to everything. We dragged him outside and were about to behead him, but then decided that since he's such a rare prize we'd bring him back alive. Since we were in a hurry we didn't take time to tie him up, but just dragged him here." Kneeling with both arms twisted behind, the young man was like a pinioned bird, and could do nothing but gasp for air. Seeing this, Kumagimi laughed showing her dark gums and said "It's with the help of the gods that we now have the full number of offerings for the rite. No doubt, my prayers have been answered. First let me take a look at him." When they brought a torch close, Tsuru was stunned: it was his brother who had been taken captive by the enemy and was about to lose his life! He wanted to call out "Your brother is here" but could not, and was sorely vexed as he look on. He stealthily took out his bow and watched for the right moment.

Then Kumagimi approached the young man and looked closely at his face. Both were surprised. She laughed scornfully and said "Well now, aren't you Kame, the second son of Mō Kokutei who was executed for crimes?" Gnashing his teeth, he replied in a quivering voice, "You haven't forgotten me, and how could I ever forget you? Ever since that day last year when we

were defeated at Naga River I have survived, unwilling to die until I could slay my mother's enemy. As brothers we have been in hiding here and there, praying that our enemy might still be alive so that we could accomplish our aim. We had no idea that you were here, and after climbing this steep mountain today I was exhausted and fell asleep in a ramshackle hut. Then I was suddenly taken captive. Whether it is the will of Heaven or simply Fate, I'll take my bitterness with me down to the underworld. If we had been sheltering together, my brother would no doubt have woken me. Though the appointed day has passed since we parted, he won't know that his brother was slain, and will keep looking for me. How I want to let him know where our enemy is! Though our hearts harbor no evil, what did we do in a former life to deserve such retribution? We brothers must be despised by the gods of Heaven and Earth. But haven't we been illumined by the sun and moon in this same world?" Then glaring at her he struggled against their hold, attempting to free himself and flee, but the three men bore down on him all the harder. Above the muddy courtyard the swiftly moving clouds showed no sign of clearing, and neither did the filial son's rage show any such signs, his eyes bloodshot and his heart torn. Then she said "Oh, what a fuss you make! I, Kumagimi, have been nurse to the Prince, and though I have been exhausted by the happenings of this age and have grown old, have I ever suffered even the slightest gash by the likes of you? Rather than give it too much thought, just let us take your life." Then she looked to both sides. Answering "At your command," Hei Ha drew his sword, its blade glistening. The Prince suddenly cried out, "Wait! Don't strike. Kumagimi, Mō Kokutei was a devoted minister to the realm, and it would be a great pity to kill his children. Spare his life!" His show of mercy reflected wisdom unusual in an eight year-old child, but paying no heed to the Prince's command, Kumagimi issued a command of her own. "Who told you that Mō Kokutei was a devoted minister? Whether or not he was 'devoted,' he was also a traitorous minister, and was convicted and executed. His sons curried favor with Tametomo, your enemy, and also led people astray with falsehoods, saying that I was their mother's mortal enemy. We cannot pardon such a villain. This is all for your majesty's benefit, so would you have me do something contrary to that? If we have more for our offering by taking this Kame, that will be more auspicious than anything we could get from tortoise shell divination.¹ Even though you are still a child, a ruler is a ruler, so don't say such fainthearted things. What are you waiting for, men? Off

¹ An ancient form of divination practiced in China based its oracles on the patterns of racks in tortoise shell when baked. "Kame" means turtle/tortoise.

with his head!” Leaving him no way to escape, they tightened their grip on his arms. Hei Ha went behind him and raised his sword to strike when from the eave of the shrine there was the twang of a bow and an arrow pierced Hei Ha in the side, the arrowhead protruding four or five inches out the other side. He fell noiselessly to the ground. Just as An Ketsu cried out “What the ...” a second arrow pierced his throat and he fell backward. Kame quickly turned around and, grabbing the sword, cut off Gi Su’s head. Tossing his bow aside, Tsuru jumped down. Kumagimi cried out in alarm. Kame wondered how it was that his brother was hiding here and was able to save him from certain death, but there was no time to ask. The brothers stood on either side of Kumagimi, and Tsuru lifted his voice in bold rebuke. “There is no need for me to announce myself as Tsuru, Kame’s older brother. I’m sure you haven’t forgotten me. Today I went to your hideout deep in the ravine seeking lodging and the boy who was minding the place didn’t take me in. It didn’t occur to me that he was the Prince, but since I was not able to stay there I went on my way and became lost. I came across this Tenson Shrine, and after doing obeisance before it, thought I would spend the night there. But then a large number of mountain men assembled, and in order to see what it was all about I hid myself behind the framed writing and watched everything from beginning to end. I wanted to announce myself and strike you down at once, but there were many of you and only one of me, so I just kept silent watch until the men went away. That ought to have been an opportune time, but it rained and grew dark, and I hesitated because I didn’t want to harm the Prince. Then unexpectedly I was able to save my brother as he faced death. In all of this I was aided by Heaven. Even if you tried to flee, how could we let you? Identify yourself as the mortal enemy of our mother. Now!” With both of them fulminating against her, Kumagimi answered calmly, “You’re just spouting off at the mouth. It’s no lie to say that I tried to buy time so that no harm would come to the Prince. If you had even a shred of respect for the divine lineage of the Tenson family, you would not have allied yourselves to that Tametomo who is of dubious background and sought to destroy the Prince. I have always been a loyal subject of the realm. I know nothing of your mother. Do you have proof that I’m her mortal enemy?” Tsuru took out a dagger that was on his waist, unsheathed it, and held it in front of her. “How about this, Kumagimi? You surely recognize it. Many years ago when you escaped through the sluice of Haebaru Castle you threw a blade at me which was unmistakably our mother’s dagger, a memento of her.² On the hilt are golden images of a crane and a turtle. On the

² This event is related in chapter fifty-four.

banks of the Fuzō River where our mother Niigaki was slain, both this dagger and the child in her belly were missing. There's no surer proof than this. That you are our mother's mortal enemy, we have already heard from the mouth of Mōun. You say you want proof, and here it is, and now you must suffer the consequences of your evil actions. Will you still deny it?" Again taking up his sword, Kame said in a gallant voice, "What 'loyalty' could this traitorous old crone possess? Using the young Prince to evade your crime, you are a villain who hid yourself in the mountain and gathered a bunch of petty thieves to slander everyone and deceive people. If we don't strike you down now, could anyone call us loyal or filial? Hand the Prince over, and submit to the blade!" With all of her defenses gone and no counterargument to make, the blood drained from Kumagimi's face as she gritted her toothless gums and, shaking the thinning needle-like hairs of her head, glared at them with a piercing glow in her eyes and said, "Why should I hide anything now? It was I who stole that dagger by the banks of the Fuzō River and, having slain a pregnant woman, ran away. You try to kill an enemy and end up being killed." With that she pulled a dagger out of her breast pocket and began slashing. Tsuru took her on, and with blades flashing, from the right Kame parried her strokes. The old woman demonstrated surprising skill,



engaging on the right and thrusting on the left. As the fighting grew in intensity, the Prince came down the steps and, running about, cried out in a tearful voice, “Tsuru, Kame, wait! Let Kumagimi go! This is so dangerous!” Looking back, Kumagimi sternly warned him, “Stand back or you’ll be hurt!” At that Tsuru and Kame paused, and Kumagimi took advantage of that to stamp out the flame of the torch, pitching everything into darkness and making the aim of their sword thrusts uncertain. Basing their motions on the sound of each other’s breathing they continued to thrust and retreat, then thrust again, meeting only empty space. They kept this up for some time until suddenly they heard a cry, and it was unmistakably Kumagimi who said “Now one has been downed.” Hearing their enemy say that, Tsuru wondered if his brother had been slain, and Kame in turn worried about Tsuru. But as if the sword strikes had created wind, the moon appeared and illuminated a most tragic scene as Kumagimi drew the fallen Prince onto her lap. A wound on his chest was bleeding, and both of Kumagimi’s shoulders had been slashed with blood flowing down from them.

Both shocked and dumbfounded by this scene, the two brothers exchanged glances, then said, “Kumagimi, in the dark you have assassinated the Prince. How despicable! Now your crime is more than doubled because you have killed your sovereign lord. Prepare to meet the punishment of Heaven!” Then standing on both sides of her they raised their swords. She looked up and cried, “Wait, my two grandsons, Tsuru and Kame! Listen to your grandmother’s confession. But let me catch my breath for a moment.” Tsuru and Kame laughed scornfully, “Has old age addled your mind? You think you can deceive us? We don’t recall ever being called your grandchildren.” Smiling, she said, “It stands to reason that you would doubt. At first I thought it only right that you should slay me, but until we call each other ‘grandsons!’ and ‘grandmother!’ even if I am the enemy of your mother could you still boldly strike me down? Listen up and I’ll tell you my life’s story now. My father was the chief of Katsuren, a magistrate of junior first rank, and his name was A Kō. He was of distinguished lineage, but because of a crime he committed he was banished to the island of Kikai. I was very young at the time, but together with my mother was driven out of Katsuren where we had lived so long. Unable to bear the hardships, my mother passed away. I lived by myself for three years, but finally decided to go serve my father in his place of exile. And so from the port of Tomari I secured passage on a sulfur merchant’s boat and went to Kikai, but when I inquired after my father I was grieved to learn that he had died of an illness that past spring. I was without hope, and was like an unmoored boat.

But possessing a dauntless spirit I thought that since I had come that far, I might as well go on to Satsuma Bay and learn some skill that would be of use to me after returning to my own country, so I proceeded on to Japan. I spent two years in Ōtomari in the province of Ōsumi³ studying the mysteries of Yuichi Shinto,⁴ and then had an opportunity to go to Higo and worship at the Aso Shrine. As I was lodging there, one night on the eve of the festival of the god, I was seduced by a young officer. Though making promises, out of shame we did not tell each other our names, and until we should meet again he gave me the dagger he carried, and I took out of my breast pocket a scroll and gave it to him. But after we parted the next day, I got wind of a bit of news from my home country that my family had been pardoned. Securing passage on a merchant vessel I finally returned to the kingdom of Ryukyu. I was informed by the officials that even my father had been posthumously pardoned and that one of his three estates would be returned to me. I received the one in the *magiri* of North Ravine. Since I had been instructed in Shinto, I was appointed as head of the shamanesses, and was known as ‘Queen of the North Ravine,’ having numerous disciples.⁵ I enjoyed more wealth and prestige than a lord, and was pleased that my father’s reputation had been restored. But my joy soon turned to sorrow as to my shame I realized that I was with child from that one night with the Japanese man, and as the months passed it was becoming difficult to hide it. If it became known, I would not escape censure from the authorities for transgressing the rules of one in service to the gods. But the birth occurred early, and it was a beautiful little girl. I felt sorry for her, but there was no way I could raise her, and so under cover of night I surreptitiously took her to Hamagawa, one of the villages in the *magiri*, and abandoned her, placing in her swaddling the nine-and-a-half inch dagger that the Japanese man had given me and tying it with a cord. Though I returned with resolve, I left many tears along the way. The next day and every day thereafter I gazed at the sky in that direction, wondering who might have picked her up, hoping that she had not been eaten by a dog. And though years passed I could not forget my daughter. But I was head of the shamanesses, and as such was not supposed to have a husband. I have not consorted with other men because I was determined to remain faithful to that man in Japan, and so thinking I passed my prime in vain. As the years went by, by inherent

³ This place name is fictional.

⁴ Also known as Yoshida Shinto, a sect founded by Yoshida Kanetomo (1435-1511) which attempted to disentangle Shinto from Buddhism by inverting the teaching of *honji suijaku*, which had taught that the Shinto *kami* were manifestations of Buddhist divinities.

⁵ This is recounted in chapter thirty-three.

boldness turned into foolishness and I was lost in greed and desire. I was drawn into the *chūfugimi*'s and Ri Yū's plot to destroy the Princess, who was renowned for her wisdom, but it did not succeed, having been exposed by Mō Kokutei. I was driven out of North Ravine, but supported by Ri Yū I lived in secret near the capital. Unchastened by that failure, I again assisted the *chūfugimi* in her evil design and conspired with Ri Yū to steal an infant from a commoner and say that the *chūfugimi* had given birth to it. As I was wandering about on the other side of the Fuzō River, I came across a woman who had fallen ill. I could tell that she was in the last month of her pregnancy. I deceived her children into going to purchase medicine, and after they left I cut the woman's belly open and took the infant out. I saw the dagger that she so cherished as she was dying and, thinking that it might offer clues to who these people were, was unwilling to leave it behind. After I had handed the infant over to Ri Yū, I gave the dagger a close look. I could never forget it: it was the very one I had tied into the swaddling of the girl I abandoned that autumn thirty-nine years previously, the one the Japanese man had given me as a memento. It was unmistakable with its hilt decoration of a crane and a turtle. So then, that woman I killed with my own hand was my daughter whom I had abandoned. I regretted it a hundredfold, lamented it a thousandfold, but my evil deed could not be undone. And yet the sorrow that was the recompense of my hidden evil deed only metastasized into greater greed. As I thought about it, I realized that although I didn't know who my daughter's husband was, the infant I had stolen was my own grandson. If I could ensure that he would become the King of Ryukyu, then that might atone for my daughter's unnatural death and turn it into unexpected good fortune. With such thoughts I looked forward to a bright future and, hiding the facts of the matter, waited for my grandson to grow up. However, through Mōun's sorcery both the King and the *chūfugimi* were killed on the same day, while Ri Yū took flight with the Prince, barricading himself in Haeburu Castle. But since both sides lacked sufficient forces, he was not able to mount an attack. And yet my grandson was honored as the new sovereign. Since he had already been in my care for six years, in spite of my advanced age I did not mind the responsibilities of continuing to raise him. But unfortunately there was internal strife, and on the day when the Grand Minister Ri Yū was slain by Tametomo, you two brothers, accusing me of being the mortal enemy of your mother Niigaki and announcing yourselves as the sons of the former Lord of the Middle Castle, Mō Kokutei, to my mortification I at last knew who my son-in-law was, and the parentage of my grandsons. Then this Prince was the younger brother of Tsuru and Kame. If Mōun were

destroyed and my grandson the Prince were made King of the realm, then it would be an easy matter to make his two older brothers ministers of junior first rank. I thought of proposing that to you, but it was impossible as I was being pursued with such vengeance. When I threw that dagger at you, my having missed the mark owed to our blood relationship. And then when, strangely enough, Hei Ha and An Ketsu brought Kame here captive, I felt an uneasy yearning and wanted to tell him, but decided instead to test his bravery and gave the order to behead him. But unable to bear it, the young Prince halted it, shouting ‘Mō Kokutei was a devoted minister to the realm, and it would be a great pity to kill his children. Spare his life!’ Such wisdom at so young an age undeniably owed to a natural pity for a brother. Even while facing death, Kame’s courage in continuing to denounce me, and Tsuru’s ingenuity in saving his brother as he hid behind the sign frame, all of this is incontrovertible. In order to strike a parent’s mortal enemy, you did not begrudge repeated setbacks and adversity. Once when you were in service to the Princess and were taken captive by Mōun, and then again taken captive by Ri Yū, the ardor of your filial devotion did not wane. Then perhaps with the aid of Heaven, both of you survived the defeat of your army at Naga River. And that you now assail me as the mortal enemy of your mother accords with the sense of honor of a brave warrior, and compared to your nobility, my own wickedness is all the more shameful. I deceived everyone, calling my grandson Prince though he was not the son of King Shō Nei. I was pleased to hear of the Princess’s and Tametomo’s death, counting it to my own benefit. I worked out a scheme to dupe survivors of the war into serving me, having them kill people and take their heads for sacrifice. Compared to the evil heart that I fed as I hid in the depths of this mountain, the undefiled filial devotion of Tsuru and Kame makes me feel all the more ashamed. I determined that I could blot out my guilt by slaying in front of the Tenson Shrine the child I had falsely claimed was a Prince, and then be cut down myself by my adult grandsons Tsuru and Kame. And so I extinguished the flame with my feet so that my guilt in slaying the child would not be evident, but then the moon came out and it was plain to see my fresh blood mixing with his. Your grandmother’s crimes eclipse those of Xiang Yu, and now that you have heard my confession, take my head, make yourselves a name for loyalty and filiality, and build up the prestige of your family. Though I had three grandsons and did not consider any of them fools, the one that I raised myself—the one on whom I lavished such loving care—as I have just told you, I have slain him, my aged and benumbed fist unsure where it was striking. Though my tears flow like tonight’s rain, they could never wash

away the stain of my guilt. Having killed my own daughter and then my own grandson, the fitting retribution for me is inescapably to be killed by my grandsons. Why do you not strike my head off?" She urged them in a voice grown feeble, like the cry of an insect. For a time, Tsuru and Kame only sighed. "Having heard that you are our maternal grandmother, how could we possibly raise a blade against you? The sage said 'Good and evil, right and wrong all proceed from the human heart.'⁶ Though out of filial devotion and manly spirit we aimed to avenge our mother's death, yet goodness had no path to pursue here. We searched after our mother's mortal enemy, who was her mother, and the false Prince was the orphan child of our deceased parents. Although we did not know that he was our brother, according to the laws of the land we would likely not be able to avoid the punishment of complicity and having our family disbanded. Whatever the course of events that led to this, is it not misfortune upon misfortune? In spite of our father's loyalty and our mother's virtue, the world is ignorant of their innocence, and our younger brother who did not know them was called a Prince. If we were now to slay our maternal grandmother, we would only be sinning against our mother. It is difficult to determine whether this calamity was created by humans or by Heaven. As brothers, there is no other course for use to take but death. This is the end." Then with the grassy ground as a mat they prepared to thrust their swords into each other when Kumagimi quickly looked up and cried out in an agitated voice, "You're fools, Tsuru and Kame! Even if you're now in a distressed state of mind, what reason is there to take your own lives? That dagger is a gift from your grandfather in Japan, and if you use it to slay Kumagimi, it would not be a matter of grandsons killing their grandmother, but rather a matter of my being slain by my husband's blade. Don't you understand that? I am a maternal relative, but an enemy of the realm, and if you refuse to cut me with just one stroke, then you are selfish ditherers who are lacking in both empathy and justice. Won't you give up on this useless suicide and just take your grandmother's head?" With each word the flow of blood from her wounds increased. Unable to bear looking at that, Tsuru and Kame tossed aside their swords, their tears streaming down, resenting their lot that they were unable to die, but also unable to strike her down. Exasperated with them, Kumagimi sidled up to them and, fixing her eyes on them, said, "If you don't slay me, even if these wounds heal, Heaven will not pardon me. Give me that dagger." Then grabbing it, she pressed it against her neck and was about to cut when from inside the shrine a voice boomed out, "I will not permit the

⁶ It is unclear which sage said this.

old traitor Kumagimi to take her life. Chinzei Hachirō Minamoto no Tametomo is here.” At that announcement, grandmother and grandsons looked up saying “How is this possible?” as the doors of the ancient shrine opened and Tametomo came out leading the Princess, Sutemaru, Shōju, and Kiheiji. Tsuru and Kame shamefacedly came forth and made obeisance, saying reverentially “We were deeply grieved when we thought you had been killed in the defeat of our army at Naga River last year, but could not be happier to see unexpectedly that you and the Princess were inside the shrine, and are safe and sound.” Smiling broadly, Tametomo said, “I escaped death at Shimabukuro and surprisingly met up with the Princess. Then accompanied by a man from Kakeroma we went to Kowajima, where I was reunited with Sutemaru, my inheriting son who was born in Japan, as well as my trusted retainer Half-mile Stone-throwing Kiheiji. We remained on that island until spring, and have recently returned to this country in secret. We came to Koegu and, unaware that it was Tō Shōju’s hideout, requested lodging at a certain house, where we were deeply impressed with the posthumous virtue of Shōju’s late wife, Manazuru. We departed the next day and climbed this mountain in order to pray at this Tenson Shrine. We shut ourselves in intending to spend the night here, and to keep the wind out we bolted the door from inside, so no one would be aware of our presence. And so we overheard and also peeked at what was happening: the appearance of the Prince and Kumagimi, and the plight of the brothers Tsuru and Kame. Sensing that karma was in play here, Kiheiji had something important to say, and so we halted Kumagimi’s penitential suicide. Now Kiheiji, as you wish I’ll allow you to assist in her suicide.” Descending the stairs, Kiheiji first looked closely at Tsuru and Kame, then at Kumagimi, and sighed. “The blossom of the past has faded and I, too, have grown old, but if I do not identify myself, you will not likely recognize me. Listen closely, Kumagimi, and you also, Tsuru and Kame. Hearing this old woman’s final confession and making some comparisons in my mind, I likewise realized my own guilt from more than forty years ago. Kumagimi’s secret lover who gave her a trifling gift of a nine-and-a-half inch dagger on the eve of the festival at Aso Shrine was called Half-mile Stone-thrower. It is the way of the world to have various amorous affairs when one is young, and I had no wife at the time. Not being a man of refinement, though we joined sleeves and made promises, I did not divulge my humble name. I gave her a dagger and she gave me a scroll as mementos until we should meet again. When I returned home and looked at what she had give me, it was a map of the Ryukyu kingdom, including a detailed account of its dialect and customs. I had heard from my late father that my

ancestors hailed from Ryukyu and he had told me various stories, but none of it was written down in a book. Wanting to find out who the young woman was, four or five days later I went back to Aso and made various inquiries but was not able to find her. I dismissed the encounter as a one-night affair, and years later married a woman named Yatsushiro. Remaining true to her, I settled down to a life as a hunter on Mount Yū. I was fortunate to encounter the young master Hachirō and when he became ruler of all nine provinces of Kyushu, I was privileged to serve at his side as first among his twenty-eight chief vassals. There could have been no greater honor. Then in order to retrieve the crane that his father had been ordered to release, he decided to make a secret journey to Ryukyu, but had no guide. The map that I had kept all those years proved useful to him, and with that as his guide he easily obtained the crane and returned. This all owed to the mercy the gods had on him because of his filial loyalty, but I did not mention to anyone that it also owed to the merit of a young woman who had given me the map. As I think now of that casual encounter and see my grandsons in the hilt ornament on that dagger, the seed that I unknowingly sowed, the two women to whom I gave myself in Japan, and my three grandsons, the good and evil, right and wrong of everything, I can only respond with tears. I feel shame in disclosing the bond of so many years ago and identifying myself.” Then pressing her hands together, Kumagimi said, “So then, my lover of that night was you! Now both of us are like old trees no longer bearing blossoms or fruit, our roots never having grown together. According to the saying ‘meeting is the beginning of parting,’ how is it then that we again come face to face? You were never my husband after that, but I feel at ease now with just this. Even a bent tree can bear blossoms, and even a warped person can have fidelity. With no pity for past intimacy, I take my leave from this world. Please put our grandsons’ minds at ease.” Then it dawned on Tsuru and Kame that the close retainer to Lord Hachirō, Half-mile Stone-throwing Kiheiji, was their maternal grandfather. At such an unexpected meeting they shed tears as they acknowledged their blood kinship. The Princess, Sutemaru, and Tō Shōju also marveled at the coincidence.

Chapter Sixty-Four

Beheading his erstwhile lover, Kiheiji chastises himself for concealed wrongdoings,
Cutting of their topknots, Sutemaru makes their filial submission complete.

As the law of karma dictates, what goes around comes around. And so also here, having heard for the first time in detail through Kumagimi's confession the background of the Prince, the Princess both marveled and lamented. "Who would have thought that the Prince whom I considered my brother was not my brother but was the child of Mō Kokutei? Kokutei's distant ancestor was the eighteenth Tenson ruler King Ha Rin and was thus said to be of royal lineage. That is why he served the realm as a lord and was given important responsibilities. Since the former King did not have a son, he could raise the child with his surname and pass the throne on to him, and the line would not be broken. But in deceiving the world and fooling your sovereign by passing the child off as a Prince you were already guilty. However as long as he was alive, there would have been something you could do to make amends. But to slay with one stroke a child who did not yet understand the workings of the world, though you regretted your past mistakes, you have lost sight of the whole picture, and have not seen the forest for the trees. Thus you have only compounded your error. Until today I thought of the child as my brother, but even now I do not consider him unrelated. Though Mō Kokutei was our retainer, my mother and I owed him a great debt of gratitude. Even allowing for the brothers' filial devotion, the things she did are too harrowing to spare her life." Tsuru and Kame also wiped their eyes, and Tsuru said, "Our mother Niigaki was past her prime, nearly forty, when she realized she was pregnant. She went to a soothsayer to learn of the child's fortune, and was told 'The child will be a boy. He will rise to great nobility but will die an unnatural death before he reaches the age of ten.' The soothsayer seemed very sure of himself and so our mother was all the more anxious, but she said nothing about it to father. When she was near the end of her life she told us about it for the first time. That was eight years ago, and we dismissed it as a falsehood spouted by a phony fortuneteller, trying to put her mind at ease. But now we see that the divination was undeniably correct. Even the bechnuts he gave to one he did not know was his brother were an expression of fraternal sincerity, which he also showed to Kame though his protest was unable to save him. His tear-stained face is still on my mind's eye." Tsuru tried to hide the weepiness of his voice among the cries of insects. Sighing, Tametomo kindly reasoned with them, "Youth are like

imprudent sages, unable yet to ascertain guilt. Though Kumagimi's crimes cannot be excused, she is not undeserving of some praise. Whatever her motives in passing her grandson off as Prince, during the six years she confined herself in Haeburu Castle, the people of Sannan province believed that there was still an heir to the Tenson line, and that was a factor in Mōun's inability to conquer the area. That was one merit. And if Kumagimi had not given the map to Kiheiji, would I likely have been able to come to this land stealthily and retrieve the crane, even if it was a command of the sovereign and my father? That was a second merit. Thus you brothers should take Kumagimi's remains and bury them along with those of your young brother, and mourn both of them." Assuming a dignified mien, Tsuru and Kame replied, "We hesitate to contradict such gracious counsel, but we have wounded our grandmother Kumagimi, and cannot evade the lawful consequences of such a crime. With your leave, we shall cut open our bellies." With that, they were about to take their own lives when Sutemaru quickly halted them, saying "Have you two lost your minds? You had no idea that Kumagimi was your maternal grandmother, and you wounded her because you did not know that, and your motives were filial. When you became aware that she was your grandmother, you attempt to die because of your error, and that is a filial response for grandsons. What you did appears to be a crime, but it is not a crime. Your deaths would be like putting another scratch in a jewel. And so today, in lieu of your deaths, I shall cut off your topknots, and then Kumagimi, who wished that she be slain by her grandsons, will not die in vain. It would not do to ignore the intentions of filial grandson. And now, the punishment!" Drawing his sword, he quickly cut off their topknots. They were unable to restrain tears of gratitude for the benevolent kindness of Tametomo and his son. A smile appeared on the face of Kiheiji, who had been unable to save the brothers, and with the same feelings Kumagimi pressed her hands together and bowed deeply before everyone. Though painful for him as well, Half-mile Stone-thrower brought his blade down upon her. Though they had resigned themselves to it, the brothers both felt as if they had been set ablaze.

Just then, dozens of mountain men—Kumagimi's minions including Tō Ki, Nan Kitsu, Tai Zō, Kō E and others—appeared from behind the ancient shrine and all kowtowed, saying with trepidation, "We were originally nameless warriors, but we followed you in your army, and barely escaped with our lives when we were defeated at Naga River. One could say that it was the same for you and the Princess. We had heard that our chief strategist, Tō Shōju, and our two vanguard leaders, masters Tsuru and Kame, had been slain, and so we fled into this mountain

fortress where by chance we encountered Kumagimi. She was hiding out in Tachinoki Ravine, where she was protecting and serving the Prince. We came into the service of the Prince, but had no way to make a living, and so we became mountain marauders. Just now we returned from down the mountain and overheard Kumagimi's final confession. It was only then that we realized that the Prince was not King Shō Nei's son and that you and the Princess are both safe and sound. Seeing you before our eyes is like having the heavens open, and we are overjoyed." Asking each man his name, Tametomo said, "Though you were only rank-and-file warriors, how could you not recognize your vanguard leaders, Tsuru and Kame? And when your comrades Gi Su, Hei Ha, and An Kitsu took Kame captive in the night, why did they follow Kumagimi's orders and were about to behead him? Unwilling to submit to the traitor Mōun you escaped into this mountain and served the Prince, but it does not seem like loyalty to the country. There is some inconsistency between your words and actions, leaving me in doubt. I find it difficult to understand." At that they all raised their heads and replied, "What you say is quite reasonable, but those three were not originally one of us. They were retainers to chief strategist Tō Shōju. They escaped death, came to this mountain twenty days ahead of us, and were already in service to Kumagimi." Turning to Shōju, Tametomo asked, "Lord Tō, do you recognize these men?" Stepping closer, Shōju inspected the corpses and said, "I don't recognize them at all." Then Tametomo's doubts only increased. Reading the expression on his father's face, Sutemaru said, "What do you think, father? For some time Kumagimi had been hiding here, protecting and raising the Prince by herself, but more recently with the defeat at Naga River and before surviving soldiers assembled here, Mōun was no doubt aware of the situation. Though he was aware, rather than send an army to apprehend them, he probably plotted to use you to kill the Prince and Kumagimi, and then mislead the unknowing populace into battle against you saying that you had slain the Prince. Thus I think that Mōun sent those three ahead as spies, having them say that they had been in Shōju's service. That way, even if the plot failed, they would cause you to harbor suspicions of Lord Tō. Isn't that right?" Finally understanding, Tametomo nodded and said, "Your observation makes sense, Sutemaru. Examine the corpses!" At that command, Tsuru and Kame joined Shōju in searching through their breast pockets where they found tallies in the shape of scales.¹ Not only that, but the plates of armor under their robes bore Mōun's insignia. Everyone was amazed, and praised Sutemaru's sagacity. Then Tametomo also lauded Tō Ki and

¹ Mōun had metamorphized from a dragon, hence the scales.

the others for not having lost their passion for justice, and for having assembled there, then asked, “How many of you are there?” Tō Ki responded, “There are fifty-eight of us here, and in addition two hundred and fifty or sixty hiding in Kuniyoshi and Okuyama.” The Princess was very pleased to hear this and offered words of felicitation, “Lord Hachirō, having come to this shrine to worship, we have not only been reunited with Tsuru and Kame, but without even recruiting we now have a force of three hundred. This must be through the divine aid of the Tenson ancestors.” Tametomo then made obeisance before the shrine, saying “If your heart is sincere then even if you do not pray, the gods will give you aid. But I am afraid we have spilled much blood and defiled this sacred place. Kiheiji, Tsuru, and Kame, bury the remains of the Prince and Kumagimi to remove the pollution. Lord Tō, in my stead please offer celebratory paper cuttings. It’s almost daybreak now. I shall go with the Princess and Sutemaru to Kumagimi’s hideout in Tachinoki Ravine and wait for all of you there. Until later.” Then calmly descending the steps he had ten of the mountain men stay to clean the blood away and, with Tō Ki and Tei Zō as guides, along with the Princess and Sutemaru set out for Tachinoki Ravine just as a faint glow was appearing in the sky.

Chapter Sixty-Five

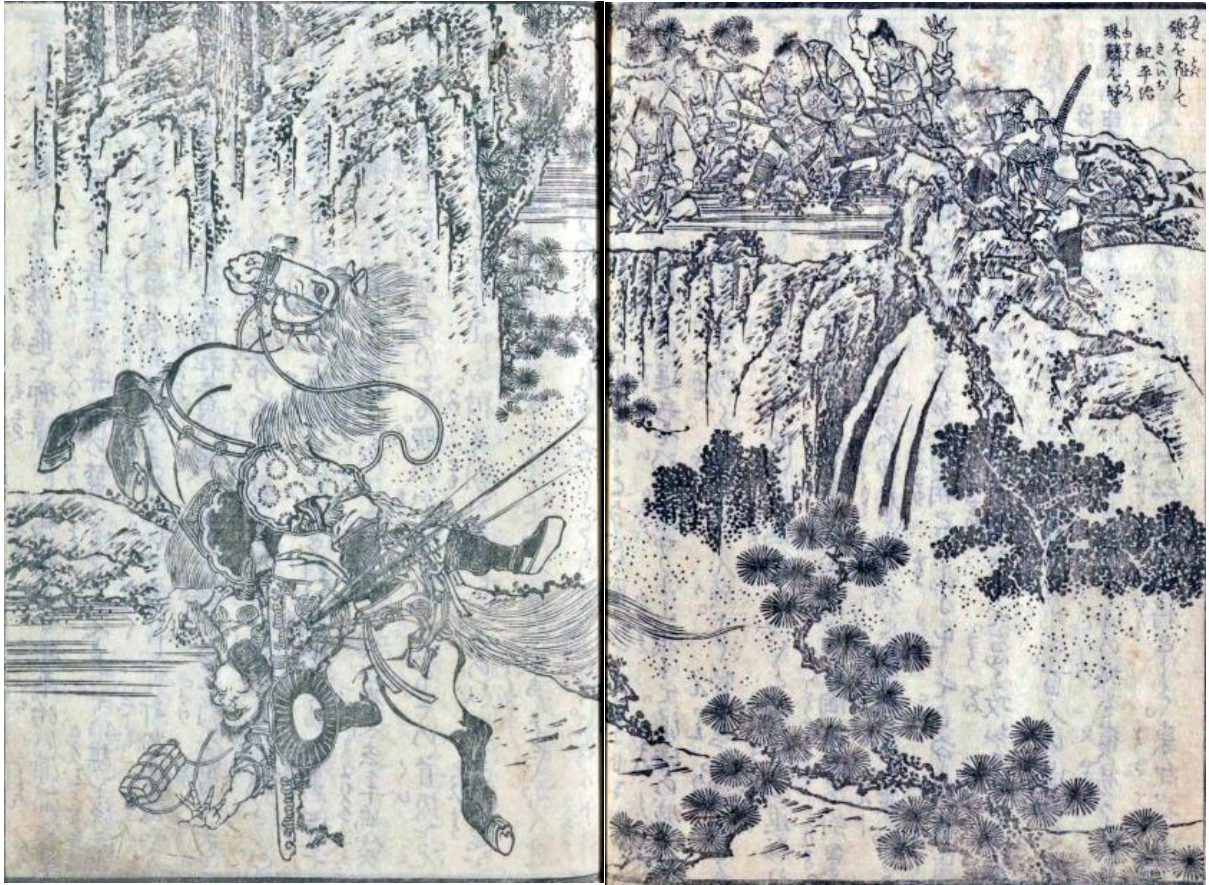
Cutting down a rebel commander, Rin Tayu delivers provisions,

With a sacred arrow, Sutemaru shoots Mōun.

Tametomo and his son entered the empty cottage in Tachinoki Ravine, and a while later Kiheiji, Shōju, Tsuru, Kame, and ten of the mountain men arrived together. That day Tametomo sent Tō Ki, Tei Zō, and others to summon their comrades, and within four or five days all of them assembled on Mount Kusuku. Tametomo praised their determination and distributed meat and fruit among them. Impressed with his beneficence, their morale increased greatly. When Tametomo, Sutemaru, Kiheiji, Shōju, Tsuru, and Kame met to discuss strategy, Half-mile Stone-thrower said, “Our lord has rapidly obtained a force of three hundred soldiers, but compared to the numbers under Mōun’s command, it is only like one hair on nine oxen. Moreover, this mountain is close to the capital. Won’t Mōun soon be aware of our moves? When you move first you have control, but when you delay you end up being controlled. There is no time for deliberation. If we divide our three hundred troops into two companies and then from between the mountains in Ōzato and Mawashi charge deep into their ranks, catching them off-guard with a sudden attack, the rebel army will be unprepared and we’ll destroy them in one battle. Quickly make dispositions!” Shōju responded to this urging with a few moments of thought, but then said without a trace of reservations, “Your opinion would appear to have merit, but the rebel forces are enormous while ours are small, and even taking advantage of steep terrain for advance and retreat, it would be difficult suddenly to drive deep into the capital. And if there is an extended standoff between us and them, what provisions could we offer our troops? If Mōun knew that our soldiers were starving, he would divide his forces and attack from the rear. And so it is not an ideal plan for victory. We should just gather in this mountain and act as if we are about to attack the capital, and then when the enemy surrounds us, we’ll spend a day engaging them with arrows, during which time our commander will sneak over the mountain with a hundred crack troops and take Urazoi Castle. Mōun’s forces will then be pressed from both sides, and won’t have a way to defend themselves, right? You should give this your wise consideration.” Tametomo listened carefully, then asked “Advance is easy, but retreat is difficult. Sutemaru, what do you think?” He answered, “Yes, I think that Tō Shōju’s plan is suitable. We should make the Princess commander on this mountain, leaving two hundred men here with Lord Tō as strategist.

After that if my father creates a rumor that he is encamped on the mountain and that we would be attacking soon, then Mōun would be certain immediately to send a large preemptive force against us. At that time, my father should lead me, Kiheiji, Tsuru, Kame, and a hundred crack troops surreptitiously around through the easter mountain route. Urazoi Castle will be unprepared and will be easy to take.” Tametomo followed this counsel, appointing the Princess and Shōju as commanders over the two hundred to remain there, including Tō Ki and Tei Zō, while with Tsuru and Kame as guides, he, Sutemaru, and Kiheiji would lead a hundred men to capture Urazoi Castle. Then instructing the hundred men to assemble at the base of Bengatake Peak, he had them leave two or three at a time. The next day, Tametomo, Sutemaru, Kiheiji, Tsuru, and Kame set out stealthily in shabby garb.

In the meantime, Tō Shōju pasted paper together to make pennants, split bamboo to make arrows, and turned the mountain into a fortress. At night he lit numerous bonfires, causing people to say “Tametomo has again raised an army on Mount Kusuku, and will attack the capital.” Hearing such reports, Mōun was alarmed and summoned his rebel commanders, including Tō Son, Ki Risshi, and Zen Kō, saying, “I thought that even if Tametomo had three faces and six arms, there was no way he’d be able to escape the attack by fire at Shimabukuro, but not having seen his head as proof, I remained worried. So then, that Tametomo did not die, but has secretly been recruiting surviving soldiers and is encamped on Mount Kusuku, preparing to attack! But what I can’t understand is why, although I always stood watch with my all-seeing eye, I was not able to ascertain anything about Tametomo’s and the Princess’s survival or their movements. It was as if they had been covered by thick clouds and mists, preventing me from knowing anything about them. I wonder if Tametomo has mastered the art of making himself invisible. Otherwise, whatever is aiding him could crush my powers. And so he is not an enemy to be taken lightly. Tō Son, Zen Kō, before their forces rally their strength, advance there quickly with a large army, make a surprise attack, and slaughter every last one of them. I don’t know whether it’s true or not, but I hear that Tametomo’s son, Sutemaru, is a very ingenious young man, and also that they have an old retainer with them, one Half-mile Stone-thrower, who goes by Stone for short. Don’t fail to strike them all down!” Receiving those instructions, the next day the two rebel commanders led a force of five thousand men on a campaign, crossing the Naga River. When they approached Mount Kusuku, the Princess and Shōju did not answer their battle cry but only lured them on. Then at their command, the force of two hundred rolled and threw large



rocks down on the rebels, killing twenty or thirty and wounding an untold number. “It must be the Half-mile Stone-thrower!” The ranks of the large army fell into disorder and they retreated one league, remaining there two or three days, many of them unable even to get up. Tō Son and Zen Kō thought that Tametomo’s military prowess was not to be taken lightly, and had heard of Sutemaru’s ingenuity and Kiheiji’s abilities, and so felt cautious about advancing their troops. The mists were thick in the mountains, making it difficult to determine the numbers of their opponents, and their battle cries echoed through the mountains, sounding as if there were several thousand of them. They often sent couriers back to the capital requesting reinforcements. Mōun raged, saying “This should be an easy task. I’ll rush out there and stamp out the enemy myself!” He prepared for departure.

At that time, Tametomo, Sutemaru, Kiheiji, Tsuru, and Kame, traveling at night and taking lodging during the day, approached the foot of Bengatake Peak. Sitting on a rock they were awaiting the arrival of the soldiers when suddenly they saw a man whipping a perspiring horse, riding from the north toward the south. Watching him go by into the distance, Sutemaru said, “That rider must be a messenger heading for Sanman province with urgent news. We should

have stopped him so that we could discover what it was about.” Tametomo muttered, “It’s too bad, then, that we let him go by without bringing him down.” Then Kiheiji stood up. “I’ll stop him!” Without missing a beat he picked up a rock and threw it, bringing down the mounted soldier who was already a half mile away. The man’s spine was broken and, leaning back in the saddle, finally fell from his horse. Seeing this, Tsuru and Kame were full of praise. “Indeed our grandfather’s nickname of Half-mile Stone-thrower fits him well. It’s miraculous!” When the brothers ran up and threw a rope on it to restrain it, the horse became agitated and ran back in the direction from which it had come, but grabbing it by its reins, Sutemaru brought it to a halt. Thus it also became their booty. Then Tsuru and Kame propped up the half-dead rider while Tametomo interrogated him about his background. Unable to endure the pain, at first he would not answer, but under repeated questioning finally replied, “I am Shu Rin, a junior page at Urazoi. Hachirō Tametomo has been revived and has entrenched himself on Mount Kusuku, where he is now fighting a battle. Holy Sovereign Mōun commanded that since the castles at Urazoi and Ginowa are essential for protection of the capital, they need defense and reinforcement, and so the Lord of Urazoi, Su Hakkyū, sent me as messenger to the Lord of Sajiki to urge him to send soldiers. I have no other information.” Tametomo laughed scornfully. “Hearing that much, we have no more use for this guy. Give him his leave!” Kiheiji responded “Yes, sir!” and, with a flash of his sword Shu Rin’s head fell between his knees. Then the rest of his body collapsed.

Just then, Nan Kitsu, Kō E and others came running up as the hundred soldiers began to arrive two or three at a time until all were assembled before the end of the day. Tametomo explained their strategy, then selecting from among them one who resembled Shu Rin, he had him don the deceased man’s clothing and mount his horse. Then Tametomo, Sutemaru, Tsuru, Kame, and Kiheiji all dressed themselves as junior pages and hurried with their men, reaching Urazoi Castle at half past the hour of the boar [11:00 p.m.]. The fake Shu Rin proceeded directly to the castle gate and knocked, shouting “I have brought reinforcements from Sajiki. Please open the gate and let us in.” The soldiers inside looked through the peepholes of the turret and saw the messenger they had sent, Shu Rin, mounted on his horse in the moonlight. Having no doubts, they soon opened the gates for the soldiers to enter. Having already passed through the two outer gates, Tametomo and Sutemaru approached the main gate. The commander of the castle, Lord Hakkyū, came out to meet them. Then there was a sudden commotion within the castle as

someone shouted out, “This Shu Rin who brought soldiers from Sajiki is an impostor! Be on Guard!” Greatly alarmed, Hakkyū tried to run inside, but drawing his sword Tametomo sprang upon him, beheading him and shouting, “I am Lord of Ōzato, Minamoto no Tametomo. You rebel soldiers in this castle who value your lives, surrender immediately!” Then the hundred loyal soldiers raised a battle cry, whereupon Sutemaru, Kiheiji, Tsuru, and Kame went about brandishing their swords. The soldiers in the castle were startled and fell into disorder, not one of them putting up a fight. Half of them escaped through the rear gate while half cast their bows aside, removed their helmets, and meekly surrendered. Thus when word got out that Tametomo and his son had taken Urazoi Castle, Kō Kitsu, Otsu Yu, Hei Retsu, and Tei Enzu came from Koegu with more than thirty of their fellow hunters, combining with the other for a force of over a hundred and thirty. And when those who surrendered were added to that number, it came to over four hundred. Someone said, “Provisions in the castle are sparse, making it worrisome if we come under siege. If the rebel commander of Ginowa blockades us, after a few days we would be too weakened to fight. Quickly have the men harvest unripen wheat to add to our provisions.” But Tametomo did not appear at all agitated, and said, “Within a day or two we can expect provisions to appear.” Just as everyone was wondering how to make sense of that, the soldiers manning the lookout ran down excitedly from the turret, reporting “A large number of soldiers are coming from the direction of Minowa!” Tametomo, Sutemaru, and Kiheiji went up into the turret and looked out to see two or three hundred men pulling dozens of battle carts rushing headlong toward them. Tametomo looked for a moment, then burst out laughing. “That’s no the enemy approaching. That’s Rin Tayu from Kakeroma bringing provisions. We’re revived!” He had barely finished speaking when the island chieftain Rin Tayu reached the moat and called out “I am Rin Tayu, and have brought military provisions from Kakeroma, plenty of dried seaweed, dried fish, and other things. Please announce me to the commanders.” When Tsuru and Kame were with the Princess on Kakeroma, Rin Tayu had served her, so they knew him well. They were very glad as they opened the castle gate to receive them: over three hundred islanders all clad in armor woven from wisteria vines as well as gauntlets and shin guards made of bark. Then having descended from the turret, Tametomo and Sutemaru met Rin Tayu, cordially thanking him. “You have been true to your word in delivering these provisions. That’s very praiseworthy.” Expressing joy that Tametomo and his son were safe and well, Rin Tayu gave a detailed account of what he and his men had been through. “Since setting out ten days ago, we did not have

favorable winds, and were not able to row in the desired direction. We were anxious, wondering when we might finally make it to the western beach in Tomari. And then the day before yesterday a tempest arose, but just as our boats were about to capsize, with the aid of the gods a fair wind began to blow and we soon arrived at the western beach. We got word that, with fewer than a hundred soldiers, you had already taken Urazoi Castle, and so with the lumber we had brought we assembled carts and loaded them with provisions. Just as we were making our way here, some rebel commander from Ginowa named Ki Ja led a force of two or three hundred men out of the castle aiming to take our provisions. Our hot-blooded brave islanders, with no knowledge of tactics and no martial training, by sheer dint of strength put up a fight, finally slaying the rebel commander Ki Ja. The rebel forces were then defeated, with an untold number slain. As an unexpected gain, we took their bows, arrows, swords, and armor. The men who followed me on this campaign were not only from Kakeroma, but also from Yura, Uken, Toku Island, and Little Ryukyu, all of them holding your and the Princess's gracious benevolence in high esteem, so they flocked together out of a desire to accompany me." Then he took out the head of the rebel commander of Ginowa, Ki Ja, for inspection. Tametomo and Sutemaru were greatly pleased, praising him and saying, "The work you have done exceeds that of any brave military commander. It is indeed an example of 'Even among rustics there are men of ingenuity.'¹" At that time, Mōun was about to set out to make a direct attack on Mount Kusuku when a few rebel soldiers who had fled the fall of Urazoi Castle arrived in the capital with the news. Alarmed to hear of it, Mōun wondered what kind of magic Tametomo and his son had obtained to make their tactics and activities so elusive. Thinking that nothing escaped his view, and no sound escaped his hearing, how was it that Tametomo's advances remained both invisible and inaudible? And yet, since Urazoi and Ginowa were essential to the defense of the capital, he would of course scheme to capture them. Considering that, Mōun had not stocked those castles with ample provisions, but had only sent monthly allotments, so the provisions should have run low by then. If those castles were under siege for a few days, then despite Tametomo's bravery and cunning, they would die of hunger, wouldn't they? Thus, Mōun's enemies holding Mount Kusuku were not of great importance to him, but there was no doubt that Tametomo was in Urazoi Castle. He reasoned that if he could recapture Urazoi, then the force holding Mount Kusuku would naturally fall apart. Explaining the situation to Tō Son and Zen Kō, he

¹ A line from *Romance of the Three Kingdoms*.

commanded them, “Tō Son, you go in front of Naga River to restrain the enemy in Mount Kusuku, but don’t press them to battle. Zen Kō, you return quickly to the capital and from there head for Urazoi.” Since Zen Kō had soon returned to the capital, Mōun organized an army of over three thousand with Zen Kō as commander of the advance guard, Ki Risshi over the rear guard, and himself middle commander. Setting out from the palace, they reached the foot of Mount Kame the next day and set up camp there, sending out spies to reconnoiter the enemy. Those returned, reporting “The chieftain of Kakeroma, Rin Tayu, who has long been in league with Tametomo, recruited the help of islander from various places and delivered provisions to Urazoi Castle. When the commander of Ginowa, Ki Ja, tried to stop them, they slew him.” He had barely finished speaking when another scout came running back, shouting “Having already obtained provisions, Tametomo has been reinvigorated, and is like the rising sun. He’s divided a force of six hundred into two companies and has left the castle far behind, heading this way!” Even as he spoke, men and horses were charging out of the dense forest in front of him. Hearing that report and seeing the enemy troops ahead, Mōun panicked and, abandoning his cart, mounted a horse and dashed to the front line. Tensely surveying the scene, he saw the Japanese-led army divided into two flanks and a mounted handsome youth of fourteen or fifteen wearing showy armor at the very front. Pointing at Mōun with his battle baton, the youth reviled him, “Why had this traitorous monster shown up so late? I am Sutemaru, the son of Chinzei Hachirō Minamoto no Tametomo, a descendant of Emperor Seiwa. As a child I drifted to Kowajima but was recently reunited with my parents, and then accompanied them to this land. I have been commanded by my father to punish you with death for the crimes of murdering the King and plundering the land, in order to purge my father’s resentment for Shimabukuro and to ease the misery of the people. Submit to my blade!” Then the soldiers on either side of him beat their quivers and raised a battle cry with three white banners waving in the mountain breeze, bearing the inscriptions “Grand Shrine of Amaterasu,” “Otokoyama Shō Hachimangu,” and “God of Aso.” Flanked by rows of several hundred fierce soldiers, to Sutemaru’s side was an elderly, white-haired warrior, his halberd pointing ahead. That of course was Half-mile Stone-throwing Kiheiji, whose valiant mien and Japanese-style armor reflected an indomitable courage that could stand up against a multitude. But seeing Sutemaru’s youthfulness, Mōun laughed derisively, “So, this feisty little boy has come to spout his drivel to me? Even your father Tametomo was not able to defeat me in battle. And how many times was he near death, engulfed

in flames and roving about on islands? It is only by sheer luck that he has survived to this day, but he has not learned his lesson and continues to take such risks. And now he even puts his adolescent son at the head of his army! Such a fool does not deserve to live. Someone, go take Sutemaru captive!” Slapping his saddle as he raged, the commander of the vanguard, Intelligence Officer Zen Kō, at once raced ahead on his horse and was met by Kiheiji, who also went forward to engage him, but then headed back as if to escape. Zen Kō whipped his horse, determined not to let him get away. After putting a distance between himself and his foe, Kiheiji threw a stone, and Zen Kō tumbled off his horse, bleeding profusely. Seeing this, the rebel commander Ki Risshi shouted “Let’s go help Zen Kō!” and rushed ahead with soldiers following. Taking careful aim, Kiheiji’s stone hit him in the forehead, and he fell down headlong from his horse. A group including Nan Kitsu, Kō E, and Rin Tayu then took the heads of the two commanders. Thus, Kiheiji’s skillful stone throwing downed the two commanders on whom Mōun had relied. The loyalist army then rallied and, picking up irresistible momentum, charged ahead under their banners. The rebel army fell into disarray, raising a clamor, and Mōun panicked, repeatedly intoning incantations, but his sorcery failed and had no effect. He was stunned, forgetting himself as if he did not know where he was. At that time, Mōun’s rear guard also appeared to be losing as loyalist troops attacked from the rear, raising battle cries. The one announced himself, “I am the Lord of Tochibira, Tō Shōju. Do you not know that the rebel army at Naga River has been defeated and the Princess has slain its commander Tō Son? She has already taken the palace, and is now in pursuit of the traitorous Mōun.” Being attacked from front and back like tidal waves, Mōun was without defense, and without regard for his fallen allies, ran alternately fighting and fleeing. Then from the direction of Byōgaoka another regiment of men and horses came rushing, blocking his escape. Voices thundered, saying “Don’t let that traitor get away!” Hemmed in on all sides, Mōun had no choice but to try to fight his way out, but was again blocked as Tsuru and Kame lined their horses up, forcing him back, while another party including Kō Kitsu, Otsu Yu, Hei Retsu, and Tei Enzu checked his flight on all sides. Then like a spreading fire or a racing flood, from the rear the army led by the Princess came in pursuit, followed by a rain of arrows.

By this time the rebel soldiers had all been slain or had been driven away, leaving Mōun by himself. Seeing the situation, Tametomo took out a bow with a thick grip bound with wisteria vines and an arrow fletched with eagle feathers, then pulling the string until the arrowhead almost reached to bow and taking aim, he let it fly. It hit its mark, Mōun’s breastplate, but the

arrowhead shattered and flew in pieces. Tametomo was deeply ashamed that his first shot was a failure and, riding back and forth on his horse, shot after taking careful aim, but none of his arrows were able to wound Mōun or bring him down. Finally after shooting all twenty-four of his arrows, he tossed his bow aside and sighed, “Ever since I was a child I have made a name for myself with bow and arrow, and have never failed to bring down even a heavily armored enemy. On Devil’s Island my arrow shattered the rock of a thousand pulls,² and on Ōshima my arrow sank a vessel carrying several hundred warriors.³ Even if Mōun’s body were made of steel or stone, could it stand against one of my arrows? I’ll take him down by hand!” Greatly irritated, as he was about to charge off on his horse, Tsuru and Kame hurriedly grabbed its bit, bringing it to a halt. “That would be a very imprudent action. There is no need to use an ox cleaver to carve up a chicken.⁴ That old traitor possesses unfathomable powers of sorcery, and when you try to lay hands on him, if something unexpected should occur, regret would be of no use.” At their reasoned remonstrance, Tametomo gritted his teeth and clenched his fists out of vexation. Seeing that Tametomo had given up on his reckless plan, the combined forces attacked Mōun at full tilt, but the sorcerer, rotating a six-foot barbed pole like a windmill, struck anyone who approached, crushing the skulls of some until their eyeballs protruded or dashing the brains out of other until in an instant a few dozen soldiers had been slain. Then a raven-black cloud covered him, concealing his movements. Just when they thought he was in front of them, he was suddenly behind them. The cohort from Koegu, including Kō Kitsu and Otsu Yu, as well as Tō Ki from Kuniba and Nan Kitsu from Matsukawa, all bore heavy wounds. But Tsuru and Kame did not retreat even one step. To the country, Mōun was the mortal enemy of the crown, and to their family, he was the mortal enemy of their parents, so if they did not vent their rage now, when would they have another chance? They shouted and hollered as they fought, and were joined from behind by the Princess and Shōju. They charged furiously, but Mōun’s movements became all the more erratic. If they struck on the right he appeared on the left, and if they slashed from the front he parried from the back. Seeing that his comrades were in trouble, Tametomo could no longer bear it and determined to have it out with the traitorous wizard. His horse was already pawing the ground when Sutemaru came dashing around the hill on his left, preceded by Kiheiji.

² This account appears in chapter eighteen.

³ This account appears in chapter twenty-two.

⁴ This phrase is taken from the “Yang huo” chapter of the *Analects*.

Along with the Princess and Shōju, Kiheiji's two grandsons were being tormented by Mōun, and seeing that, he did not hesitate to wield his three-foot sword among the four who were battling the monster, and he slashed with all his might. Tametomo also quickly approached, brandishing the precious sword Unomaru that had been renamed Manazuru. No doubt frightened by the wondrous power of that sword, Mōun called forth a wind and a cloud that swept him up into the air. As he was rising, Sutemaru took out the arrows of peach wood that he had offered to three gods on Koha Island, attached to one of them the golden tag bearing Yoshiie's inscription and, pulling the string of his bow as taut as possible, uttered a brief prayer. Suddenly two doves appeared, alighting on the tops of the banner poles, and somewhere in the distant sky the cry of a crane could be heard. Taking that as an auspicious sign, with a twang of the bow he sent the arrow whizzing. It flew like a comet, piercing deep into Mōun's neck. He fell back instantly, tumbling off his horse. Thinking "well done," Tametomo jumped off his mount and, raising his sword, stabbed him nine times and then without flinching cut off his head. The sky suddenly clouded over, followed by a heavy downpour. It became pitch dark, for a time making everything indistinct.

Chapter Sixty-Six

In the Dragon Palace, the three wise ones express their resolution,
At Couples Mound two infants are born.

That day, Sutemaru had a premonition and had brought a lot of rain gear with him, so in spite of the downpour they remained dry. Tametomo asked Sutemaru, “How did you know that it would rain today, preparing all this rain gear?” Sutemaru answered, “After a major war there will be a year of famine, and after a great slaughter there will be a rainstorm. That’s a common saying since olden times. Anciently, when King Wu of Zhou¹ attacked King Zhou of Shang² and crossed the Mengjin Ford, a white fish leaped into the boat and that was considered an auspicious sign. The King Zhou’s suicide was followed by torrential rain.³ Thus an auspicious sign was given to a sage king, and rain was sent to calm the overabundance of *qi* resulting from the slaughter. Since you employed righteous warriors to strike Mōun, white doves alighted above the banners and the cry of a crane was heard in the heavens. Then a cloudburst washed away the excessive *qi* from the carnage. Since I knew that we would not fail to slay Mōun in today’s battle, I brought rain gear.” Both Tametomo and the Princess, as well as all of the soldiers, lauded his abilities. After a time, the rain stopped and the sky cleared. When they gathered to inspect Mōun’s remains, they did not find his human form but rather that of a dragon-like serpent more than fifteen yards long. They could see that the two jewels of Ryukyu which had been beneath its jaw had fallen through its wound and were on the ground. Its scales were shaped like overlapping half-moons, its claws

¹ D. 1043 BCE.

² 1104-1046 BCE.

³ These events are recorded in the “Zhou benji” chapter of *Records of the Grand Historian (Shiji)* and in the thirteenth chapter of *Shuo yuan*.



were like the anchors of a boat, its eyes like highly polished mirrors, its enormous mouth red like a vessel filled with blood, and its entire body as solid as an iron pillar. Everyone was astounded at the sight of it, their eyes wide and their mouths agape, and many were terrified. Then Shōju stepped forward and said to Tametomo and Sutemaru, “As I consider this matter, I am reminded that anciently when the Tenson ancestors first came to this land and ruled as kings, there was an enormous evil dragon that was able to transform itself into various forms, and it caused great affliction among the people. Thus, the land was called ‘Ryukyu,’ written with characters meaning ‘dragon.’ Then the Tenson ruler slew the beast, relieving the people of their suffering and taking the two gems—which were named ‘ryū’ and ‘kyū,’ also the name of the land. The place where the gems were taken was named ‘Jewel Castle,’ and the place where the beast’s remains were buried is called Mount Kyūkyū, or ‘Old Dragon Mountain.’ That is, Takamine. The Tenson ancestor left a final injunction, saying ‘The dragon [*mizuchi*] is our land’s greatest enemy. If our descendants let curiosity get the better of them and open the Mizuchi Mound, then the virtue of the sovereign will decline and the government will not last. For that reason I have erected a stone

monument at Akase in Kitahama on Little Ryukyu. Even if there is a national crisis, anyone who prays at this stone monument will escape calamity. How grievous it would be to have a degenerate ruler! But if the government fails, there will be a bright sun rising from the east, and it will rise in the morning and illuminate our land with its rays. Make sure to be discrete!’ That has been passed down orally for generations. And yet King Shō Nei indulged his curiosity and opened the mound, resulting finally in the beast of misfortune, which led to the king’s demise. Although by praying at the monument in Akase the Princess was able to destroy the beast, Mōun prevailed in Chūzan province and finally gobbled up the northern and southern provinces as well. So there can be no doubt that Mōun was the same dragon [*mizuchi*] that the Tenson ancestor slew in ancient times. Its vindictive spirit had not perished, and its bones, after having lain for ten thousand years, revived and it sought retribution. And considering the final injunction of the Tenson ancestor, that ‘there will be a bright sun rising from the east, and it will rise in the morning and illuminate our land with its rays,’ this must refer to today. Lord Hachirō is an imperial descendant from the great land to the east, and is thus progeny of the sun goddess. The phrase ‘it will rise in the morning and illuminate our land with its rays’ is summed up in the two characters of Tametomo, ‘tame’ meaning ‘benefit’ and ‘tomo’ meaning ‘morning.’ Therefore, in the stead of our Tenson line, the ones who should govern this land are our great commander and his son.” Thus surmising from the past and projecting on the present, he picked up the two gems and presented them to Tametomo who, however, did not accept them. “I cannot believe baseless theories. Lord Tō, you should take these gems into your safe keeping for the time being.” No matter how much he was urged, he would not even touch the gems, and so Shōju finally relented and, tearing off the sleeve of his robe, wrapped the gems and stowed them inside his armor. Then Tametomo ordered men to gather firewood and burn the remains of the dragon, but though it had been cast into a raging fire, even its hide would not burn. Having no other choice they threw it into a clump of grass, but strangely enough, like frost under the morning sun it immediately disintegrated and, not even retaining a skeleton, all became liquid and vanished. Everyone was astounded, not understanding what had happened. Observing it closely, Sutemaru said, “There is no cause for suspicion. This grass must be an antidote for serpent poisoning, and could thus be expected to dissolve the remains of a dragon. Is there a lot of it in this country? What is the name of this grass?” Even the elderly warriors answered “We don’t recognize it at all.” But then giving it some thought, the Princess said, “There is reason in your judgment. My husband’s martial

virtue is able to move Heaven and Earth, and so many good omens follow. So this grass grew in order to heal serpent poisoning. Let's try it on the wounds of Tō Ki, Nan Kitsu, Kō Kitsu, and Otsu Yu who were injured by Mōun.” They plucked some of the grass and applied it to the wounded men and they were instantly healed with no pain remaining. They were all overjoyed, saying “From ancient times there have been seven kinds of serpents in our land. Large pit vipers are called *habu*. They have round heads and short tails, and few people who are bitten by them survive. Thus when making a vow, people often say ‘If I break this vow, may I be bitten by a *habu*.’ The appearance of this wondrous herb that can heal such poisons is all due to the beneficence and virtue of our great commander and his son. How auspicious this is!” Smiling agreeably, Tametomo said, “It is also commonly said ‘In southern lands there are horrible poisonous serpents.’ The appearance of this grass is not the product of any virtue of mine. I wish nothing but the good fortune of the country. Why do you call that poisonous serpent *habu*?” Shōju answered, “There is a theory that it is a corruption of *hanpi*, a medicine made from viper skin, but that is not cogent. *Habu* is simply an ancient word in our country.” Then slapping his knee, Sutemaru said, “That brings something to mind. In Japan, the highest grade of silk is called *habutae*, which combines *habu* with *tae*, a sort of fabric woven from the fibers of the paper mulberry. Thus, the name likens it to snakeskin. Dried persimmons are also effective against snake poisoning. But if you unwittingly have the molted skin of a snake in your firewood, then your metal pots and kettles will break instantly. If that happens, you should quickly put some sweet potato skins in the fire and your broken pots will return to their original condition. Take note of that.” Everyone was amazed at the breadth of his knowledge, and after that everyone planted that grass by their homes, calling it *habu* grass. Then after intoning a victory song three times, Tametomo and his son had a hundred or so men tie up and carry the dragon's head. They soon entered the Dragon Palace, and all in the three provinces and thirty-six satellite islands submitted to their rule. Then hanging on the monster's head a sign saying “Rebel sorcerer Mōun,” they displayed it outside the Kankai Gate and every day people flocked to see it. Later, they had it thrown out into the *habu* grass, where it strangely melted away.

After the traitorous rebellion had been completely suppressed, one day Tametomo assembled everyone who had accomplished meritorious deeds—Shōju, Kiheiji, Tsuru, Kame, Rin Tayu, and others—and said, “King Shō Nei was a weak ruler and allowed traitorous retainers and an evil sorcerer to bring the country to ruin, yet he fortunately had the Princess. According to

the customs in the great land of Japan, even a woman may rule as a parent to the people. Should we not quickly install her on the throne and let the people know that they have a sovereign?" Straightway rising from her seat, with a perspiring face the Princess emphatically declined. "What unexpected things I am hearing from you! I am not the original Princess, and people know that Princess Shiranui's spirit resides in this body. Even if I look like the Princess, if I were to assume the throne over my husband, that would be like inverting Heaven and Earth. If you insist on it, then I shall take my own life." Then someone in the group said, "Is your highness not merely being modest? In that case, Our great commander is of stellar virtue and is son-in-law to the former King, so we beg him to ascend the throne and put our minds at ease." But shaking his head, he refused, saying "What you are advising has never been my intention. I am a masterless warrior, a castaway from Japan. From the beginning I did not aspire to come to this country, save it from disaster, and gain honor for myself. In order to strike Taira no Kiyomori, the enemy of my lord and of my father, I set out by sea from my lodging on Mount Kihara headed to the capital, but encountered a tempest that destroyed our boats and drowned the crew, and I alone drifted to this country. Intending only to repay old favors to Princess Nei, I spent many years as an object of hatred and scorn, but even though I would appear to have achieved my aspirations, ultimately I did not succeed in slaying my enemy Kiyomori. Why should I become king of this country and change my ambition toward spending the rest of my life in enjoyment? Reputation follows upon accomplishment, and then one should withdraw.⁴ Even if I do not measure up to the ancients, I should return to my native land, go to the mausoleum of the New Cloistered Emperor, cut my belly open, and go down to the underworld as a loyal retainer. Even if you could succeed in moving the Rock of a Thousand Pulls, you will not be able to move my intention. Do not bring this up again." Everyone sighed, but continued "Lord Hachirō, you are a gentleman who is modest about his virtue. In both China and Japan there are many examples of a son inheriting the meritorious accomplishments of his father. Not only that, but the supreme merit of having shot down Mōun belongs to Sutemaru. We should install him as our lord and look up to him as our king." Having reached this unanimous conclusion, they took Sutemaru by the hand and tried to get him to ascend the throne, but he angrily declined, saying "You do not understand what you are saying. My parents are above me. It is improper for a child to go above his parents. Filial piety is the foundation of a country. If I were to go above my parents in rank and thus become an

⁴ A phrase from the "Xiu shen" chapter of *Mozi*.

unfilial child, what kind of example would I then be to the people? That is nonsense!” No matter how he urged him, he did not seem to be of a mind to comply, but then Kiheiji stepped forth and said, “Enthronement cannot be determined by compulsion. However, if our great commander should return to Japan, this country will again be disquieted. But if you were for a time to rule as regent, then the matter of ascension to the throne would be settled quite naturally, would it not? To begin with, one with great merit should receive honor.” Then Shōju also stepped forth and said “Our great commander, his wife, and his child have all declined out of modesty and adamantly refused the throne. How, then, could any of us soldiers accept a reward? I cannot imagine doing so.” Tsuru and Kame both agreed, saying that they could not in that case accept a reward. Hearing such remarks from all sides, Tametomo said, “If merit is not rewarded and crimes are not punished, then the country will not know even a day of peace. I quite agree with what Kiheiji has said.” Then he appointed Shōju as Lord of Koegu in addition to Kochibira. Tsuru was appointed as Lord of the Middle Castle, the original domain of Mō Kokutei, adding to it several villages and changing his name to Mō Kokukaku. Kame was put under the charge of his maternal grandfather Kiheiji, was renamed Hatchōki, and made guardian of the Dragon Palace. Kiheiji was made Captain directly serving Sutemaru. Rin Tayu was given administration of Kakeroma as well as all islands south of Little Ryukyu down as far as Kume Island, sixteen islands in all. Tō Ki, Nan Kitsu, Tei Zō, Kō E, Kō Kitsu, Otsu Yu, Hei Retsu, and Tei Enzu were all made junior pages and all were given administrative duties over districts and villages. The Princess was installed in the Middle Castle, served by Tsuru, while Tametomo would go back to Ōzato and resume the title of Lord. Sutemaru was appointed Lord of Urazoi and would be known as Minamoto no Takaatsu. Feeling that the offices Tametomo and his son had appointed to themselves were too lowly, they recommended, “Please at least take the title of ‘Father to the Country’ or ‘minister of Law’.” But he was not willing to assume even those distinctions, and so everyone expressed gratitude for their rewards and saw Tametomo, his wife, and his son off to their respective residences. Then as they were setting out to their own domains, Rin Tayu took his leave and was about to return to Kakeroma, saying to Tametomo, “When I was leading this islanders to this western beach in Tomari, rowing furiously to deliver the provisions, our boats nearly capsizes in a storm when someone—we did not know who—dressed as a nobleman with a sprig of plum in his cap, appeared on the prow of the boat. The tempest quickly subsided, and all of our boats arrived safely. This must have been the same mountain wizard that we met last

year,⁵ and is the same messenger to the Cloistered Emperor of Sanuki. The miraculous protection he offered was most welcome.” Cocking his head, Tametomo explained in detail, “That must have been the god of the Tenman Shrine⁶ in Dazaifu who saves from disasters at sea. When I was young in Chinzei,⁷ I always went to the Tenman Shrine at Anraku Temple, where one night in a dream Michizane appeared by my pillow and recited a verse:

Izuku no mo ume dani araba ware to shire kokorozukushi no hoka na tazune so

Wherever there are plum blossoms, know that I am there—

do not seek for anything unless your heart is in it.⁸

And then I awoke. After that, whenever I see plum blossoms I never fail to bow before them, and your having been saved must have been because of that. The veneration of Tenman Tenjin, the deified spirit of Prime Minister Sugawara no Michizane, began in earnest during the Kanpyō and Engi eras [889-923]. When this god was human he served selflessly at court, and was a man of great refinement. His literary talent was without ancient or contemporary equals, but he drew the envy of the Minister of the Left Tokihira⁹ and, though innocent, was relegated to governor of Dazai.” He continued with the account, which brought tears to the eyes of Rin Tayu, who every morning thereafter recited both Sutoku’s verse on “plovers on the beach” as well as Michizane’s verse on plum blossoms as he bowed in worship. One year when he was sent with a delegation to China, the boat capsized in the Meihua Sea near Fujian and only Rin Tayu survived by holding on to a plum branch until he was picked up by another boat and returned to his native land. Thus in awe at being rescued yet again by divine aid he erected a shrine on Kume Island where he venerated Tenman. And so worship of Tenman in the kingdom of Ryukyu began with Rin Tayu. (based on *Ryūkyū ki*)

Now although Tametomo had entered Ōzato Castle, he was beset by many matters of business, and already in autumn of that year was making rounds throughout the country inquiring about hardships the people faced, promoting agriculture, and encouraging enterprise. Disguising his attendants he set out from Ōzato Castle, going first to the Tenson Shrine where he made offerings, and then on to the Middle Castle. Then accompanied by the Princess he went on to

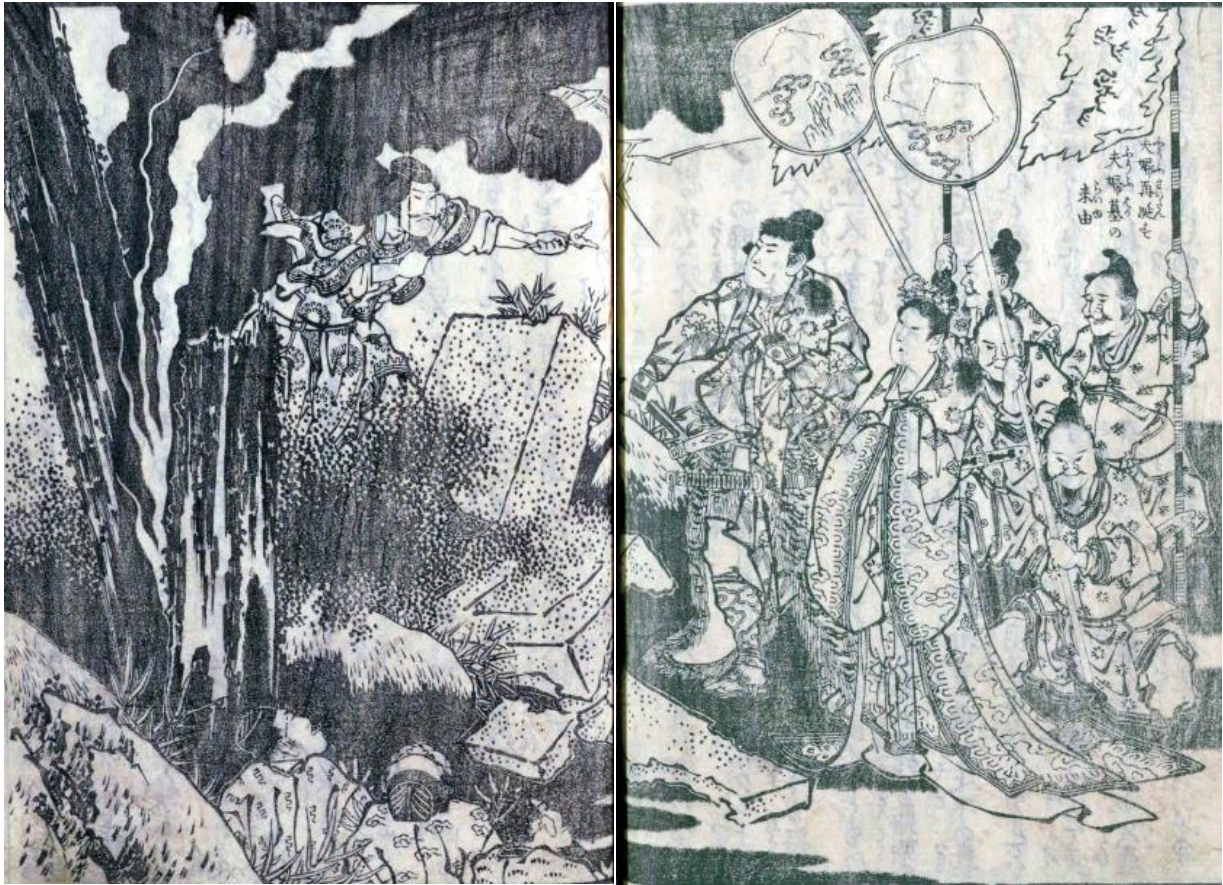
⁵ This account appears in chapter fifty-seven.

⁶ That is, Sugawara no Michizane, who was often identified by plum blossoms.

⁷ Kyushu.

⁸ This verse appears in vol. 1 of Arai Hakuseki’s (1647-1725) *Tokushi yoron*.

⁹ Fujiwara no Tokihira (871-909).



Mausoleum Hill where they made obeisance in the mausoleum of King Shō Nei, then on to Kuba where they paid respects at the tomb of Lady Ren. On the way they wanted to stop at Manazuru's stupa and offer incense. When they started up that mountain, Shōju came out of his castle, meeting them by the wayside, saying "I am most grateful that you would condescend to visit the grave of my deceased wife." Then he acted as their guide, leading them far up the mountain. Caught in a rainstorm, they took shelter under an ancient pine tree waiting for it to clear when suddenly a bolt of lightning fell not far from them. The sky soon cleared and they left the shelter of the tree. Looking at the stupa mound, they saw that the lightning had fallen on it and the tomb had been broken open and from inside they could hear the cry of an infant. Thinking it very strange, Tametomo brushed the soil away and looked inside to see infant twins inside, a boy and a girl, not more than a hundred days old. Then the Princess along with her husband took the infants into their arms and, looking back at Shōju, said "These children were no doubt born of Manazuru's spirit, and are the son and daughter of Lord Tō. Though Manazuru was wedded to you, you were not able to spend even one night together, and then she perished in the national disturbance. She must have died with many regrets. And so her spirit haunted her stupa and

returned to serve you. Through a relationship that defies rational explanation, she conceived and bore these children. That much is undeniable. They say that cranes go five hundred years without mating, and then male and female pair up and a birth occurs. In this case too, she simply conceived. Isn't that right?" Carefully examining the faces of the two infants, Tametomo added, "Now that I look at these twins, I can see that they bear a close resemblance to Takama no Tarō and Isohagi. Although those two were very loyal, unfortunately they sank to the bottom of the sea, but their spirits possessed a great fish that saved Sutemaru from death. All of these things could be called miraculous. So let's name this boy Takamaro and this girl Kohagi, and rename this stupa mound 'Couples Mound.' Please cherish these children and raise them carefully." Sighing, Shōju said, "When I was still hiding in this mountain, Chitose was pregnant, about four months, I think. But when I realized that Chitose was an embodiment of Manazuru's spirit, and thought that there was no way she could thus be pregnant, I was very confused. And yet her having given birth to these children while in the grave, though it could not be more mysterious, yet the great transformations in Heaven and Earth are limitless, and so one cannot say that such a thing could not be. I have not yet been father to a child. Half-mile Stone-thrower does not have a child, but at your command is raising his grandson Kame. I envied him, because to be without progeny is truly a misfortune. So thinking, I had been feeling downhearted. But now, strangely enough I have twins. My joy is beyond words." When the attendants were putting the stones back where they had been on the grave, they picked up an arrowhead bearing the inscription "Chinzei Tametomo." Right away it caught the attention of Shōju, who said "Isn't this what people call the ax of the thunder god? I can't understand why it should bear Lord Hachirō's name." He took it to Tametomo, who inspected it carefully and knitting his brows said, "A long time ago when I was wandering about in Higo province¹⁰ and was hunting on Mount Yū, I shot a thunder beast. My arrow struck it, but I don't know where the beast went after that. Now the lightning that struck Manazuru's tomb revealing these infants was from the beast wounded by my arrow on Mount Yū, and out of remorse for having struck Sutō, the son of my nurse, it must have granted me these children. Karma weaves such tales in this world, and brings to mind Sutō and the wolf pups Yamao and Nokaze." Everyone listened intently to his account. Then Tametomo and the Princess entered Koegu Castle, where they stayed two or three days. After that they finished making the rounds through the three provinces, then went to Little Ryukyu,

¹⁰ This account is found in chapter three, where the location is Bungo, not Higo.

where they made obeisance to the Akase monument. Looking about, Tametomo remarked “The scenery in this place is similar to that of Ōshima in Izu.” Thus its name was changed and is now generally known as Ōshima. And since the Akase monument defeated the beast of misfortune, it is also called the Mound of Good Fortune. According to *Chūzan denshinroku*, “Ōshima is a three-day journey by boat from Chūzan. It is also called Little Ryukyu.”

Tō Shōju could not have been more pleased upon unexpectedly obtaining two children. He engaged a nurse for them and they grew up in very good health. This incident became well known, and even several hundred years later the ruins of Couples Mound still stand. A man from that land, the Captain from Akahira Village, Yō Bunhō, composed a verse in mourning for the Couples Mound. It reads:

To mourn at this honored grave I have climbed the verdant peak,
a westerly breeze rises, the greenery is lush.
Much to be pitied, a couple’s resentment long lasting,
A traveler lingers long, drenching his collar with tears.

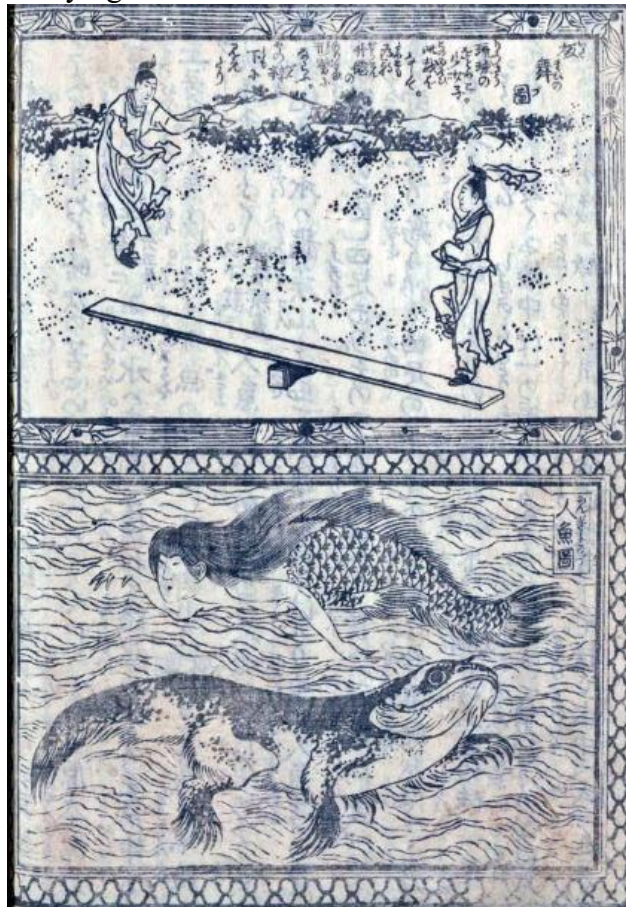
This poem appears in *Shichidō shikō*, volume one, leaf fourteen.¹¹

¹¹ *Shichidō shikō*, by the Ryukyuan poet Yō Bunhō, was published in 1806 in both Satsuma and Osaka.

Chapter Sixty-Seven

Showing empathy for the offer of the human-fish¹, the Princess readies for death,
Hearing a child's song, Tametomo resolves to depart.

In the fourth month of the second year of Juei [1183] during the reign of Emperor Antoku,² after the head of Mōun had been offered through the martial prowess of Tametomo and his son, the three provinces were all at peace. But since the throne was still unoccupied, not only Shōju, Kiheiji, and their cohorts but even down to lowly woodcutters, everyone felt ill at ease. During the five or six years following Mōun's demise, in Japan the Taira had been vanquished and it was now spring in the third year of Bunji [1192] in the reign of Emperor Go-Toba.³ Rin Tayu, who was now chief of many satellite islands, had come to offer New Year's greetings at Ōzato, the Middle Castle, and Urazoi, and was staying at an inn in Tomari. Tametomo had commanded Hatchōki (Kame) to store all tribute in the treasury of the Dragon Palace and not use any of it at all. One day, fishermen came to the inn where Rin Tayu was staying and said, "Those of us who dwell by the seaside have always offered red snapper to the court for their meals, but now they do not eat them. Now that that dreadful monster Mōun has been eliminated, the country prospers, the people are well-fed, everyone enjoys their occupation even more than before, and we can feel at ease in supporting our families. This all owes to the energetic efforts of Lord Hachirō and his son. We would like to express our grateful joy, but we have no



¹ *Ningyo* is often translated as “mermaid” or “merman,” but in the context of the present story such a rendition would be misleading.

² 1178-1185; r. 1180-1185.

³ 1180-1239; r. 1183-1198.

connections to approach them with such a visit, and have spent these past years feeling frustrated by that. Now this morning, our trawling boat caught a most unusual human-fish. They say that anyone who once eats the flesh of a human-fish will enjoy greatly increased longevity. This is not something that I should take for myself, and wish to offer it immediately to Ōzato. Since you have given distinguished service to the country with control over many islands, you know a great deal about fishing. Would you be willing to present this on our behalf?” Rin Tayu praised their consideration and, without objection agreed to do so. The fishermen were pleased, and wrapped the human-fish in bamboo leaves and took it to Ōzato with Rin Tayu, who entered and cordially explained the matter to Tametomo. Listening carefully, Tametomo smiled and responded, “Treatments for maintaining one’s health should be made over the course of years without neglect, and it is impossible to lengthen one’s lifespan with a single dose in one day. The solicitude of the fishermen at Tomari is very laudable, but since I am not a king, I cannot very well accept this for myself. Take it right away to the Middle Castle.” Rin Tayu came out and conveyed Tametomo’s response to the fishermen, who were very disappointed, but took their catch to the distant Middle Castle. Mō Kokkaku (Tsuru) communicated the gist of the matter to the Princess, who also refused to accept it. “I am the wife of Lord Hachirō. How could I possibly accept something that was rejected even at Ōzato? I cannot even imagine doing such a thing.” Having been refused there, the fishermen had no choice but to take it to Urazoi. Half-mile Stone-thrower was sad to hear that it had been rejected, but would not take the human-fish to Sutemaru. “Would Sutemaru ever accept a thing that his parents had refused? The only acceptable course is to take it again to Ōzato, and if it is not accepted there, then take it to the Middle Castle. It has nothing to do with us here.” Though the rebuff was cordially made, the fishermen felt at a loss, discussing among themselves what to do, but Sutemaru’s response made sense. By the time they went again to Ōzato and from there to the Middle Castle, five or six days had already passed, and in the heat of summer the human-fish was already rotting, emitting a foul odor. There was nothing they could do about it, so they tearfully gave up and discarded the human-fish by the wayside.

Sutemaru called the fishermen back, then summoned Kiheiji and said, “The fishermen of Tomari caught a human-fish and, saying that it was a treatment promoting longevity, presented it at Ōzato but my father adamantly refused it. Then they went to the Middle Castle and then came here, and have gone through great hardships along the way. I feel very sorry for them. The use of

human-fish is not addressed in *Compendium of Materia Medica*.⁴ In the *Classic of Mountains and Seas*⁵ we find, ‘The Dan River flows southeast and empties into the Luo River.’⁶ It contains many crystals, and also many human-fish. A note says that they look like salamanders and have four legs.’ (there are no illustrations) And in *Linhai yiwu zhi*⁷ it says (the following is from the version in *Qianque leishu*⁸) ‘Human-fish look like people and are three feet long. They should not be eaten.’ In *Jiyi ji*⁹ we read ‘The Jue River flows eastward from Mount Longhou. There are many human-fish in it. They have the appearance of salamanders, and have four legs. They make a sound like an infant crying. If you eat them, you will not develop dementia. Some say that they are sea lions. Or that they look like catfish but have four legs, and their cry sounds like that of a little child. But what they are calling a catfish is likely a salamander.’ In *Cu yi ji*¹⁰ it says, ‘When the Chief of Attendants (government office) Cha Dao was sent as a messenger to Korea, he saw a woman out in the water. She wore a scarlet robe but was nude above the waist, and behind each elbow she had red tufts of hair. Cha Dao sent his men out into the water to help her, but she only pressed her hands together in gratitude, then disappeared beneath the water. In other words, she was a human-fish.’ Then in *Chi shen lu*¹¹ we read ‘Xie Zhongyu saw a woman bobbing in and out of the waves. From her waist down, she was a fish.’ As you can see, there are various theories about human-fish, but none of them back the folk belief that eating them results in longevity. If that were true, wouldn’t I have cooked it myself and served it to my parents? A man of virtue does not eat things that are out of season, but especially not that which is of a dubious nature. One could say that you should not believe things that have been corrupted as they have been handed down among the folk, but what is worrisome is that it is impossible to determine in this case whether the appearance of an odd fish on our shore bodes good or bad fortune. From the waist up that human-fish looks like a woman. How painful it is to think of my deceased mother who, more than ten years ago, perished beneath the waves. But now as I consider that human-

⁴ Or, *Bencao gangmu*, a compilation of pharmacological practices by Li Shizhen (1518-1593).

⁵ *Shanhai jing*, an anonymous work, early versions of which date from the fourth century BCE. The current version was compiled in the early Han dynasty.

⁶ A tributary of the Yellow River.

⁷ By Shen Ying (d. 280).

⁸ Or correctly, *Qianqueju leishu*, an encyclopedic collection of various writing compiled by Chen Renxi (1581-1636).

⁹ By Xue Yongruo of the Tang dynasty.

¹⁰ By Nie Tian of the Song dynasty.

¹¹ By Xu Xuan (196-991).

fish, I find myself longing for my mother. Lately I have been distracted by many matters and have not been able to go to the Middle Castle. Make ready for me to go inquire about the Princess's condition." Then accompanied by Kiheiji and other close retainers he set out for the Middle Castle. Before then, the day after Tametomo had sent the fishermen from Tomari away, Tō Shōju had come the great distance from Koegu with news about the human-fish. Tametomo said, "I had already refused the flesh of that creature, and so had the Princess. So then, after that the fishermen went again to Urazoi? Shouldn't Sutemaru have accepted it? Now the fishermen have experienced much trouble going back and forth out of a desire to express gratitude for our favors, but we not only rejected their offering but put them to much trouble. How hurt they must feel! I think we should go directly to the Middle Castle and, if circumstances permit, speak to the Princess about the advantages of installing her on the throne. Lord Tō, you accompany me." Agreeing with him, Shōju and his retinue accompanied Tametomo, leaving Ōzato Castle. Making haste on their horses, they arrived at the Middle Castle the next day. Yet unaware of Tametomo's arrival, the Princess heard that the wrapped human-fish had rotted and that the fishermen, having lost hope, were unable to return and were lamenting the situation. She heaved a sigh. "The simple and honest common folk are sincere in their devotion, but with no one on the throne they have lost hope. In ancient times when Emperor Ōjin¹² passed away, there were two imperial sons, the younger was named Uji-no-waka-iratsuko-no-mikoto while the elder was Ō-sazaki-no-mikoto. The two brothers kept yielding the throne to each other over several years.¹³ Now we see a replay of that ancient story. Emperor Nintoku built his palace in Naniwa and established his reign as a sage ruler, and we simply cannot be compared with his brilliant reign. But I happened to be called the inheriting Princess of King Shō Nei, and just because of me the throne is vacant and the people are troubled. At any rate Lord Hachirō should succeed to the throne and fulfill the hopes of the people. Tsuru, go quickly to Ōzato and explain that the human-fish has rotted, that the fishermen are bewailing their failure, and convey to him my thoughts." She urged him on his way.

At that moment Tametomo, accompanied by Shōju, had come all the way from Ōzato, and Sutemaru had come from Urazoi along with Kiheiji. When their arrival was announced, the

¹² 201-310; r. 270-310.

¹³ The younger brother was favored by Ōjin for succession, but neither brother was willing to assume it. Finally the younger died, and the elder became Emperor Nintoku (257-399; 4. 313-399).

Princess was surprised, and had Tsuru go out to receive them. After having them seated in the inner parlor, she entered to welcome them herself, asking with a note of wonder, "I was just about to send word to you. Why have both my husband and Sutemaru favored me with a visit?" Sutemaru answered, "Unexpectedly meeting both my parents here, I am greatly pleased to see that you are in good health." Then he seated himself behind his father, while Tsuru, Kiheiji, and Shōju took their leave and went down the hallway. Then addressing the Princess, Tametomo said with determination, "In order to explain to you why I rejected the offering from the fishermen of Tomari, I discussed my thoughts with Shōju and then hurried here. Sutemaru must have had the same idea, and so our coming together here was quite unplanned, as if we had matching tallies. Now the land appears to be well governed, but since there is no sovereign in the three provinces, the people's minds are not at ease. If you shoot without a target, you have not only wasted effort with no gain, but you might inadvertently harm someone. You are the rightful successor and are of Tenson lineage. For the sake of the country and its people, you should succeed to the throne. If you continue to refuse, I'll have no other choice but to leave this country immediately. I have come to tell you that if you do not accept what I say, then I shall say good-bye to you." The Princess quickly arose from her seat. "Don't say such hateful things! I am not the original



Princess. I'm only a half-baked princess though people call me one, and it is because of me that the throne remains vacant. But what remains unchanged is my affection, and my remorse for not having been able to see Sutemaru grow up. And as the years have slipped by, I bear the guilt of troubling the people of this land. Of course I consider my husband's lot in life, but ... Sutemaru! You must follow after the way of sage kings, cultivate virtue, train knights, exemplify the martial excellence of your forefathers, and be a model for generations to come. Why should I, Shiranui, go above my husband and son, who are acknowledged by everyone as possessing culture, martial skill, and wisdom, and become ruler of this country? I cannot be persuaded without reasons for that. Twelve years have passed since that day in autumn—the second day of the ninth month of Angen 2 [1176]—when at the command of the traitorous minister Ri Yū, a gang of young ruffians tried to slay Princess Nei on the stone bridge at Koegu near Yamazato, and Manazuru took them on, fighting heroically. Greatly outnumbered, she was finally struck down. But when one of the villains grabbed the Princess by the hair and pulled her down to the ground while another one raised his sword and pierced her through the chest, she expired. Then into her body, which had become like an empty locust shell, the spirit of Shiranui entered, and she cut down those evil gangsters. Then after enduring various hardships, she again met her husband, and later was reunited with her son, thereby achieving what she intended. If you still have doubts, then look at this!” Then opening her collar to both sides, she showed them a wound beneath her breast extending through her back, still fresh and bleeding. They could see a fine white mist gloating out of that wound and rising in the air. Then the Princess fell over, like a blossom falling from a withered branch, her life ending in a most mysterious manner. Seeing this, Tametomo and the others could only cry out “What the ...!” but could do nothing to save her and only sat there watching. Then gathering her remains up in his arms, Sutemaru called out in a loud voice, “Oh, mother! Though your time in this world was limited, your having possessed the body of another means that you are a goddess, aren't you? Why don't you remain in this world and let me take care of you as is my filial duty? Just as waves on these southern islands always return, so could your spirit again come back and comfort our souls. Please, mother, please!” He tried with all his might to call her spirit back, grieving as only a filial son could. Everyone drenched their sleeves with tears. Tametomo heaved a long sigh. “It is only right, Sutemaru, that you should mourn, but wasn't it an unprecedented stroke of good fortune for us that we had Shiranui here with us so long after her death? Everything has its cause and effect. No amount of unmanly wailing will

bring her back. Your mother's spirit has returned to the other world, and since only the body of the Princess remains, that is not your mother. These remains are those of the successor to King Shō Nei, and should be sent to the royal mausoleum. How regrettable it is that the Tenson line has ended without an heir! Let us make hast to arrange a funeral." Even after his father's kind and reasoned admonition, Sutemaru still sat grieving, wetting his sleeves. They all consoled him, and as they took up the Princess's body they found that only whited bones remained around her eyes. It had been over ten years before that that Princess Nei had been slain, but now they all realized that, possessed by Shiranui's spirit, she had maintained her living form. News of this wondrous happening spread far and wide, even to woodcutters and fishermen, and everyone, whether culturally refined or not, remembered the Princess's special favors or Shiranui's bold spirit and wept as they heard of her demise.

After the funeral rites had ended, every seventh day Sutemaru went from Urazoi to visit the mausoleum. The gloomy time passed from summer to autumn, and it was soon the ninth month. In the protracted rains, the embankment along the Fuzō River collapsed, flooding farmland, destroying crops, and washing out roads. When such complaints were brought forth, in order to rebuild the embankment, Tametomo himself set out from Ōzato and made a tour through the three *magiri* of Sajiki, Hishibara, and Koegu, with Shōju acting as guide. Tametomo went to the Fuzō River where he instituted corvée, remaining at Okumatsu in Kibu to hasten work on repair of the embankment. Villagers came from all about in crowds without even being recruited, damming the water and hauling soil, so that the work was soon finished. Standing on the riverbank each day, Tametomo thanked the villagers. A group of children strolled about nearby singing

A god has come in human guise,

The waters of the Fuzō are pure.

The god in human guise has paid a visit,

the white sands have turned to rice.

Hearing this, Tametomo did not return to Ōzato, but instead entered Urazoi Castle, telling Sutemaru about construction of the embankment along the Fuzō River, then adding "When I first drifted here and crossed the Fuzō River on my way to Haeburu, children were gathered by the water singing 'A god has come in human guise ...' And this year when I again came that way, the children were singing the same song, apparently possessed by a god. Conjecturing about the

song's origin, I recall that some time ago on Hama Island when I called on a wizard,¹⁴ a wizard child instructed me, saying 'Six years from now climb Mount Yaya and wait for my master on its peak. Keep that in mind, and do not forget it.' And now the time has come. Now I must head for Mount Yaya and meet with the wizard. You, too, climb the mountain with me and face him, thanking him for his beneficence and inquiring of him what the future holds for you." Sutemaru knitted his brows and said, "Your command is well reasoned, but the dream I had last night somehow weighs on my mind. In that dream, there was a tall tree on the south mountain. That tree suddenly uprooted itself and rose into the sky. In divining whether this is a good or a bad omen, I am reminded that anciently, when Bo Qin,¹⁵ son of the Duke of Zhou,¹⁶ went with his younger brother Shu of Wei-Kang¹⁷ to visit the Duke three times, and all three times they were whipped. Not understanding why, they asked a man named Shangzi, who instructed them, 'On the south mountain, there are two trees, one called *qiao* [bridge] and one called *zi* [catalpa]. Go and look at them.' And so the two boys set out for the south mountain. When they looked at the two trees, *qiao* was very tall, commanding one to look up at it, but *zi* was laden with fruit and was close to the ground as if lying down. When they returned and told Shangzi what they had seen, he nodded and said, '*Qiao* is tall and one must look up to see it. This is the way of the father. *Zi* is short and close to the ground. This is the way of the child. You do not understand the ways of father and child, and that is why you were whipped.' Hearing this kind instruction, Bo Qin and Kang finally understood, and when they went again to see the Duke, they bowed reverentially, showing full courtesy, and the Duke received them joyfully. In light of the way of the father, then, the fact that the tall tree uprooted itself and ascended into the sky weighs on my mind and I do not feel good about it. There will be other times to climb Mount Yaya and visit that wizard. Please put it off for now." But Tametomo only laughed at this serious remonstrance. "Meetings or partings are all in accordance with the mysterious workings of creation. Even if I don't go to Mount Yaya now, are you going to keep me here to the end of my days? The task of one who governs a country is knowing the qualities of people. If you know their qualities, you

¹⁴ This account appears in chapter fifty-seven.

¹⁵ 1068-998 BCE; r. 1043-998 BCE. The eldest son of the Duke of Zhou and founder of the state of Lu, a vassal state of Zhou.

¹⁶ R. 1042-135 BCE. Often referred to as "God of Dreams," was often cited by Confucius as the supreme example of a wise ruler.

¹⁷ Founder of the state of Wei. According to some sources, he was the younger brother of the Duke of Zhou, while others cite him as the younger brother of Bo Qin. Bakin adopted the latter theory.

can put them to good use. And when you put them to good use, you will keep treachery at bay and there will be no slander. My abilities in such things are inferior to yours. But you can't always count on wisdom. If thunder is ten leagues away, you won't be able to hear it, and you can't see what is outside curtains or walls. And the mind cannot know what ears and eyes do not perceive. Therefore, a sagacious king does not conceal his superlative virtues. Now rulers have likes and dislikes, and so those who serve under him will forget the duties of their offices and fawn upon him. Those who flatter may make mistakes, but if they truckle up to the ruler, he will not censure them. After a ruler has broken a law, then his ministers will also break it, and toadies will often take advantage of such a situation. Then the country will surely be ruined. Yao and Shun were sage kings, but they were not able to do the work of twenty officials by themselves. Whether a country flourishes or fails depends on whether its ruler values wisdom in those who serve, or prefers flattery. There are only those two courses. You are surely well aware of that. Shōju is like Chen Ping of the Han dynasty.¹⁸ From the beginning he possessed the talents of a prime minister. Kiheiji combines the qualities of Fan Kuai and Zhou Bo.¹⁹ He is both brave and very loyal. One could entrust him with the responsibilities of a general. Tsuru and Kame are filial sons. Filial piety is the basis for all right actions,²⁰ and if they were made governors, they would administer well. You are both talented and wise, but if you become bogged down in personal preferences and estrange yourself from these men, then the teachings of the sages will be of no effect. When I was young I loved archery and horses, and did not pursue learning. Generally people who talk about archery say that a strong bow is what is superior. But this is mere speculation by those who know little about military matters. As a general rule, it is good if an armament is suited to its user. One who wishes only to take pride in his courage and prefers a long sword that exceeds his strength to use, or who weighs himself down with heavy armor, or who uses a bow he lacks the ability to pull, will not be able to work freely on the battlefield, and might end up losing his life. The reason I preferred a strong bow even as a child was because I possessed the strength to use it. But after our defeat during the Hōgen era when I was taken captive and Shinzei plotted to have the tendon of my bow arm cut,²¹ at first my ability to shoot

¹⁸ Chen Ping (d. 178 BCE) was advisor to Liu Bang (Han Gaozu), founder of the Han dynasty.

¹⁹ Fan Kuai (242-189 BCE) was a military general of Western Han. Zhou Bo (d. 169 BCE) was a minister serving under Liu Bang.

²⁰ A phrase from *Hou Han shu*.

²¹ This account appears in chapter twelve.

long arrows declined. Since my strength had decreased, I used a smaller bow, and my ability to shoot remained steady. Ability to do something or lack thereof is not a matter of whether the bow is strong or lax, but of the shooter's skill. Truly, Lord Hachiman²² preferred a lax bow, but he could outshoot any enemy. One must bear this in mind when ruling a country. If a ruler favors only toughness, then the people will be oppressed, and if the people are oppressed then the country will fall to ruin. But whether the people are compliant or rebellious does not depend on the strength or weakness of the country, but on whether rewards and punishments are just. If they are, then the people will aspire to virtue. Please take to heart what I am saying. I have nothing further to say." Then taking out the prized sword Manazuru and the bow he had used for so many years, he bequeathed them to Sutemaru. Beginning with the following day, for seven days he confined himself to a single room, purifying himself. Hearing of this, Kiheiji, Shōju, Tsuru, Kame, and Rin Tayu went to Urazoi to request permission to accompany him to Mount Yaya.

When the day arrived, Tametomo put on torso armor over a red-brown hunting robe and buckled on a sword with gilt ornamentation. Then mounting a white horse, he set out for Mount Yaya. Sutemaru was dressed in a pure white robe, and had the sword Manazuru buckled at his side. Shōju, Kiheiji, Tsuru, Kame, and Rin Tayu all followed on foot. Arriving at the foot of the mountain, Tametomo dismounted and, leaving all other retainers behind, climbed up to the peak with Sutemaru, Kiheiji, Shōju, Tsuru, Kame, and Rin Tayu. There they saw a wizard with a long beard, white brows, and an elongated head on a short body, sitting atop a crag and leaning against a red-crowned crane with white feathers. Tametomo and his retinue all bowed reverentially toward him. Then he beckoned to Tametomo and Sutemaru with his feathered fan, whereupon they both lit incense and calmly stepped forward. Tametomo courteously spoke, "I am a castaway, but my having been able to administer justice and put down a traitorous rebellion in this country owes entirely to your divine aid. And I cannot adequately express my grateful joy that you brought me together with Sutemaru. May I humbly ask your name?" Then Sutemaru and Kiheiji both kowtowed, the former respectfully saying, "I am deeply indebted to you for having restored me to life those many years ago, and have no way to repay you, but it gives me supreme pleasure to see your countenance again." Shōju, Tsuru, Kame, and Rin Tayu likewise bowed deeply, pressing their hands together. Then turning again to Tametomo, the wizard said, "Now Hachirō, I have always been well disposed toward the Minamoto clan. And not only toward the

²² Hachiman Tarō Minamoto no Yoshiie, Tametomo's great grandfather.

Minamotos, but ever since the age of the gods toward Japan generally. Let me tell you why. I am the founder of this country, father of the Tenson clan, and am known in the world as Amamiko, or Amamiku. I wander throughout Heaven and Earth, and in each place I have a different name. Out in the ocean I am called Watatsumi, and on land Kinmanmon. When I visit China I am known as Old Man Nanji,²³ or commonly as Fulu Shouxian. I am called Nanji because Ryukyu is in a corner of the south seas, thus an ‘old man of the extreme south [*nanji*]. And so dilettantes of later ages associated me with that star. Also in greater Japan, in Kanagawa in the province of Musashi, and in Irō in the province of Izu I amused myself with cranes, and endowed places with names like Tsurumi or Nagatsuru Village. Or the deer that are so beloved in such barbarian lands as Hormuz or Zufar,²⁴ which are called ‘deer of good fortune’ [*fulu*]. Then once when I was rambling by Red Mao Cavern, I found that it was written in various books that the name of the place was Fulu. And during the Sui dynasty in China, my name was incorrectly transmitted, writing my surname as Huansiwei and my given name as Kecedou, and thus many people in this country also understand that corrupted form. In ancient times, Huanciwei was what they called lords, and in later ages they were princes [*wanzu*], and even the word for lords [*anzu*] of each *magiri* was a corruption of Huanciwei. When this land was founded, one man and one woman appeared. I myself was the male god, and we had three sons and two daughters. When Hiko-ho-ho-demi-no-mikoto came to this country in search of his fishing hook,²⁵ he was infatuated by a woman named Toyotama-hime, who eventually conceived. When she gave birth to U-gaya-fuki-awasezu-no-mikoto she felt deeply shamed and, escaping from Japan, returned but sent her younger sister named Tamayori-hime to raise the prince.²⁶ Thus my inheriting son received the name of Amamiko, known in the world as Tenson. For that reason, my Ryukyu has from the age of the gods been called Taneshima, a vassal country to Japan. That name was chosen because the seed [*tane*] of Hiko-ho-ho-demi-no-mikoto grew in the womb of my daughter. And so people in later ages departed from and returned to Taneshima when trading with Ryukyu, and thus called it

²³ *Nani* is originally the name of a star that was popularly called *Nanji laoren*.

²⁴ Bakin would have been familiar with the fanciful descriptions of these places found in *Da-Ming yiton zhi*, compiled by Peng Shi (1416-1475).

²⁵ In chapters 42-43 of the *Kojiki*, it was not Ho-demi-no-mikoto who lost the hook, but his younger brother Ho-ori-no-mikoto. Moreover, there is no mention of the search extending to Ryukyu. This conflation of Japanese and Ryukyuan mythology appears in *Ryūkyū-banashi* by Morishima Chūryō (1756-1810).

²⁶ In the *Kojiki*, it is the younger brother who, searching for the lost hook, met Toyotama-hime, and there is no mention of her escaping from Japan, but this does appear in *Ryūkyū-banashi*.

‘the land of Tane.’ And so I have wandered far and wide, and my age is the same as that of Heaven and Earth. Though I have remained on Hama Island, I have often gone to Japan. And so in the spring of the sixth year of Kōhei [1063], when I left my favorite crane behind and went wandering about in the northeast of Japan, my crane was injured by a falcon and was unfortunately captured by a human. At the time, Lord Minamoto no Yoriyoshi²⁷ was serving as commander-in-chief in Ōshū. His inheriting son, Hachiman Tarō Yoshiie, in order to pray for the salvation of both allies and foes who had fallen in the battles of the Nine Year’s War,²⁸ attached golden tags to the feet of numerous cranes, then performed the Buddhist rite of releasing living creatures. My crane was among those, and when I returned to Hama Island, impressed with Yoshiie’s kindheartedness, never removed the golden tag. Thus after ninety-eight years had passed, when in the first year of Kyūju [1154] during the reign of Konoe my crane again flew to the east and was on Mount Yū. It was startled by thunder and got its golden tag stuck in the top of a tree, imperiling its life. When you saved it, it returned to Hama Island, and I was deeply moved by the kindness of Yoshiie, your great grandfather, and my joy was ineffable. But then, since your sovereign’s command could not be ignored, you came in secret to this country in order to capture the released crane. Out of admiration for the filial devotion evident in your having come from so far away,²⁹ I sent the crane to the Princess’s place of exile, allowing for you to obtain it easily. Then later when you were banished to Ōshima I sent it with a verse of poetry attached to console you.³⁰ And it was also I who appeared on Kojima and prevented the suicide of Nyoko, the daughter of Sabori.³¹ Those actions were insufficient to repay your kindness, and so on Kowajima I saved Sutemaru from certain death and made sure he was instructed from the secret book of military tactics that had been carefully handed down in the Minamoto clan.³² And finally I protected you, father and son, as you destroyed Mōun. It was not only through my protection that Sutemaru’s arrow was invulnerable to Mōun’s sorcery; it was also through the aid of Amaterasu, of the gods of Hachiman and Aso, of Konpira in Sanuki, and of the spirit of Emperor Sutoku, all of whom appeared on your white banner. You should always keep in mind the efficacious power of the gods. Now back in the age of the gods, Ryukyu was called

²⁷ 988-1075, head of the Minamoto clan.

²⁸ A war fought between the imperial court and the Abe clan in Mutsu province between 1051 and 1062.

²⁹ This account appears in chapter six.

³⁰ This account appears in chapter fourteen.

³¹ This account appears in chapter twenty-three.

³² This account appears in chapter thirty-two.

Watatsumi no Miya, and after mortals appeared it was known as Nanwa. In Chinese histories ‘Wa’ refers to greater Japan, but since Ryukyu history does not match that of Japan, it was called Nanwa, or ‘South Japan,’ and included Taneshima, Yaku, and Kikai. ‘Kikai’ also suggests ‘strange’ or ‘mysterious,’ implying a country full of strange things. Later it was written with characters meaning ‘realm of the devils,’ and was also called Onigashima. Collectively they were known as the ‘southern islands,’ and are now called Ryukyu. I shall not now speak of those that have been left out of the histories. In the entry for the fifth month of the twenty-fourth year of the reign of Empress Suiko [617],³³ we find in the histories the phrase ‘Seven people came from Yaku. In the seventh month, they again came from Yaku.’ Here, what is called ‘Yaku’ refers to the southern islands. And so during the reign of Emperor Tenmu,³⁴ a delegation was sent to Taneshima. In autumn of the twenty-first year they returned accompanied by a native of the land who presented a map of Taneshima, in other words, of Ryukyu. Then until the sixth year of Wadō [713] during the reign of Empress Genmei,³⁵ the islands of Ryukyu followed the Yamato court. Over ten years prior to that a scholar from the Fuminoimiki clan and an interpreter from the Morota clan were sent to the land to Tane. After that, Fuminoimiki and others, eight in all, led soldiers to this land and treated the people well, and so the following year, people from Tane, Yaku, Ami, and Tokan followed them back bearing tribute, and were all given gifts according to their ranks. This was in the third year of the reign of Emperor Monmu.³⁶ Three years after that the people of Tane disobeyed commands, and so soldiers were sent to force compliance, doing a house-to-house search and installing a governor. I recall that this was during the Taihō era [701-704]. What was then called Ami is Amami, and Tokan is now known as Tokushima. All are satellite island of Ryukyu. After that there was an imperial command issued to Dazaifu to confer court rank on the Ryukyuans, including stipends differentiated according to rank. This was in the fourth year of Keiun [707]. Later, fifty-two people from Ami, Shiga, and Kumi again accompanying Ōno Okeji presented tribute. This was in the fourth year of Wadō [711] during the reign of Empress Genmei. What is here called Shiga is now known as Mount Yae, and Kumi is now called Kume Island. Seven years after that, rank was conferred on three hundred thirty-two

³³ 554-628; r. 593-628.

³⁴ 631-686; r. 673-686.

³⁵ 660-721; r. 707-715.

³⁶ 683-707; r. 697-702.

Ryukyuans. That was in the fourth year of Yōrō [720] during the reign of Empress Genshō.³⁷ Seven years after that, one hundred twelve Ryukyuans visited Japan and were conferred various ranks. This was in the fourth year of Jinki [727] during the reign of Emperor Shōmu.³⁸ Seven years after that, the Senior Assistant Governor General of Dazai sent Ono no Oyu³⁹ and Takashina no Muraji Ushikai to set up stone markers in Ryukyu designating place names and noting distances as well as places where boats could dock and obtain fresh water. This was in the seventh year of Tenpyō [735]. Then nine years later there was an imperial command to go again to Ryukyu and repair the stone markers. This was in the sixth year of Tenpyō Shōhō [754] during the reign of Empress Kōken.⁴⁰ It was during the Tenpō era [742-756] that the various islands of Ryukyu were put under the administration of Ōsumi,⁴¹ consisting of the two districts of Noma and Yaku. They were indeed part of Japan, not unlike the seven islands of Izu. Thus in the hundred ninetieth volume of *Ruiju kokushi* in the section on customs and manners there is a note saying ‘Kuzu (Japan) Haito (Ōsumi) Tane, Nantō, person of Yaku,’ and this is not in the section on commoners. That was because in the eighth month of the first year of Kōnin [810] during the reign of Emperor Saga,⁴² the monk Ryōshō rode in the same wagon with a woman who was being banished to Taneshima. And more recently Shunkan, the priest of Hōshōji, was banished to Kikai.⁴³ Whether Tane or Kikai, they are general names for all of Ryukyu, as I have already explained in detail. There must be some reason why, although in an edict given on the third day of the fifth month of Tenpyō 7 [735] during the reign of Empress Kōken the administrative districts of such places as Taneshima are given, but unfortunately in the ninth month of Tenchō 1 [824] during the reign of Emperor Junna,⁴⁴ in accord with the recommendation of the Senior Assistant Governor General of Dazai, Lord Ono no Minemori,⁴⁵ administration of Taneshima was curtailed from Ōsumi. His reasoning was: ‘Taneshima is in the southern seas, and has few people or soldiers. It has no fortifications against enemies. The stipend of its overseer is 36,000

³⁷ 680-748; r. 715-724.

³⁸ 701-756; r. 724-749.

³⁹ D. 737, noted poet.

⁴⁰ C. 718-770; r. 749-758.

⁴¹ A former province comprising the eastern part of present-day Kagoshima prefecture.

⁴² 786-842; 4. 809-823.

⁴³ Shunkan (1143-1179) was banished because of his involvement in the Shishigatani plot to overthrow Taira no Kiyomori. This incident is treated in *The Tale of the Heike*.

⁴⁴ 786-840; r. 823-833.

⁴⁵ 778-834.

bales of rice, but their annual tribute amounts to no more than a hundred deer hides. It is but a name with no substance. It amounts to much loss with little gain.’ And so Taneshima was abandoned. After that, there were no envoys to the imperial court. Although there was a gradual estrangement, there was also a sense that it would without doubt eventually become a part of Japan. After all, in antiquity it had received the favor of Hiko-ho-ho-demi, and now has been revitalized through the martial virtue of Hachirō. To receive favors and not recognize them would put one lower than birds and beasts. Who could forget that principle? But you, Hachirō, are a broad-spirited man of righteousness, neither clinging to life nor pursuing fame and fortune. Rather you have despised those who would not strike down the enemies of your sovereign and your father. Since you have not forgotten those enemies, you should not remain in this country. Thus, aside from Sutemaru, who could possibly become its king? Don’t you know that now in greater Japan Yoritomo, the son of your elder brother Yoshitomo, raised a righteous army and destroyed the Heike in the western seas and was put in charge of hunting down Taira accomplices throughout the country. He was given second court rank, and though he is now in Kamakura he controls the more than sixty provinces of the country. But I do not think that his descendants will flourish very long. His governing authority will naturally fall into the hands of the Hōjō. But when the military fortunes of the Hōjō wane, your descendants will rise up in Shimotsuke,⁴⁶ will be called generalissimo, and will maintain power for more than ten generations. So then, Hachirō, what regrets could you still have? You have left your legacy on Kojima near Hachijō, at Shiramine in Sanuki, and on Mount Zōzu. If you let your spirit roam and enlighten future generations with your divine gravitas, then there would be no greater honor than that, would there? After performing meritorious deeds and making a name for oneself, to retreat from the world’s stage is the wisest way.⁴⁷ You should go back right away.” Being thus urged, Tametomo laughed cheerfully. “As a hapless exile, if only I could have raised an army and eliminated Kiyomori and his clan, that would have been good fortune in battle. But the enemy of my sovereign and of my father has been defeated, so whom could I take on as my foe? There is nothing left for me to do but return immediately to my native country and cut my belly open at the mausoleum of Cloistered Emperor Sanuki.” Rubbing his fist, he unwittingly stood up.

⁴⁶ In chapter thirty, the theory was advanced that Ashikaga no Takauji (1305-1358), founder of the Ashikaga shogunate, was a descendant of Tametomo.

⁴⁷ This saying is adapted from *Daodejing*.



Fukuroku Jusen smiled and said, “Your filial loyalty and truthfulness are in accord with Heaven and Earth and with gods and demons, and since you have achieved the Way without seeking it, even if you die you will not perish, and even if you live your will be equal with the gods. There is no need for you to prepare a boat for your return. The Cloistered Sanuki Emperor will soon be coming to receive you.” Then in a purple cloud trailing from the east stood Tametomo’s younger brother Genkurō Tamenaka along with Shiranui and those who had fallen in the battle of Hōgen: twenty-seven loyalists including those at the vanguard, Sutō Kurō, Sukima Kazue no Akushichi Bettō, Tedorī no Yoji, Tedorī no Yosō, Uchide no Kihachi, Ōya no Shinzaburō, Koshiya no Genda, Yoshida no Hyōe, Matsura no Jirō, and Schūta.⁴⁸ Heading these, Tamenaka led a horse forward and shouted to Tametomo, “It has been a long time, hasn’t it, brother? In the tenth month of the year before last, it was I, Tamenaka, who received a command from the Cloistered Sanuki Emperor to bear an urgent message to Rin Tayu of Kakeroma that he must save you and the Princess. And now both our sovereign and our father have long awaited you. Come!” Tametomo eagerly arose and was soon taken up in a cloud. Mounting the horse and with Tamenaka and

⁴⁸ This list of names appears in *Sankō Hōgen monogatari*.

Shiranui on either side, he took up the reins. Seeing this, Sute-maru was unable to contain himself and beckoning to him, shouted “Father! Wait a while! And mother, too, you are coldhearted. Leaving me here alone like this is merciless of you. Take me with you!” Kiheiji also shouted and waved his arms, devastated to see them leave. Shōju, Tsuru, Kame, and Rin Tayu were like little monkeys in the treetops deprived of their mother, waving and looking up into the heavens until the eight-fold cloud became indistinguishable from the mists and disappeared.

Chapter Sixty-Eight

At the Royal Office in Chūzan, Shunten is enthroned,
With veneration of gods and playing of music, a grand finale to our tale.

Though Sutemaru's tears had not yet dried from parting with his mother, he was now abandoned by his father and, doubled over with grief, he lapsed into increasing dejection. Kiheiji, Shōju, Tsuru, and Kame were unable to console him. Seeing this, Fukuroku Jusen said, "Sutemaru, do not grieve so deeply. A filial son might mourn, but not to the waning of his own life. Making a name for oneself to the glory of a parent is the culmination of filial piety. Shōju, Kiheiji, and the rest of you, accompany Sutemaru back and attend to the crucial matters of the country. I shall yet bring good fortune. Whenever there is a festival, if you make a likeness of me and install it in a shrine—and if households hang images of me on their walls during the first three days of the new year—you will all have good fortune. With every new generation on the throne, a peculiar person will be born in this country. You will recognize him because of where he is born, and his features will be like mine. If he is born among the commoners, he should be raised in the palace. If you ask him about the good or bad fortune of anything, he will be able to answer. He will be unusually intelligent, and will not indulge himself with women. Just give him the surname of Ju. There is much more I should instruct you about, but if I divulge too many of the secret workings of Heaven, it would rather invite disaster. Be discreet in all you do." With that he immediately stood up and, mounting his crane, flew off in the direction of Hama Island. Sutemaru and the others reverentially bowed down before him in awesome wonder.

Then Kiheiji, Shōju, and the others took Sutemaru to Urazoi Castle, consoling him on the way. They kept urging him to accept enthronement and used divination to determine an auspicious day in the twelfth month for the ceremony to be performed in the Dragon Palace. Sutemaru was left with no way to refuse. The enthronement as King of Chūzan took place in the Dragon Palace, which was renamed as the Kankai Palace, and Sutemaru became King Shunten. All the court officials and all officers were lined up, raising their sleeves in a shout of "Banzai!" In Japan it was the fifth day of the twelfth month of Bunji 3 [1187] during the reign of Go-Toba. Shunten was seventeen years old that year (according to *Nantōshi*, Shunten was twenty-two at the time of his enthronement), and his canonical name was Takaatsu. Soon a general amnesty was proclaimed for the entire country. Rin Tayu's daughter Kumeko was appointed lady-in-

waiting, and it was determined that Shōju's daughter Kohagi (five years old at the time) would be queen consort because of her father's meritorious service to Tametomo. Kiheiji was appointed Minister of Law, with Shōju serving as National Patriarch and Kame as Regional Officer. Rin Tayu was offered a rank below that but with an expanded domain. The rice granaries were opened up and the people all celebrated. Thus everyone in the country—noble and base, young and old—heard of Tametomo's having become a wizard and ascended to heaven, and they huddled together lamenting the loss of his leadership, feeling like fish or terrapins out of water. But as soon as Shunten was enthroned and his enlightened government was instituted, they were overjoyed with the welcome changes,



and their songs filled the marketplace. Then Shunten assembled all meritorious retainers and declared, "The dragon was an enemy to this country. Thus its gems should not be used as royal insignia. Bury the two gems *ryū* and *kyū* on the eastern peak by Tama Castle to forestall any lingering calamities that might come from them, and henceforth we shall use the precious sword Manazuru and the golden tag from the crane as sacred treasures representing the kingdom, and they shall be handed down for generations. What do you think?" "We all think your majesty is right," came the reply. And so they expedited those tasks, and from the spring of the following year, they built a shrine near the Yasusato Bridge north of Seven Star Mountain, enshrining the two arrows received from the wizard. They build another shrine for Amaterasu and Hachiman, and yet another for the god Hachirō where Tametomo's likeness and bow were venerated. These three shrines together were known as the Yasusato Hachiman Shrine. The Tenson Shrine on Ryōgatake was also rebuilt, as well as new ones including Naminoe Shrine, Nagi Shrine, Futema Shrine, and Sueyoshi Shrine. The god of Kumano was venerated along with the god of Aso,

Emperor Sutoku, Inari, and Tenman. King Shunten himself composed the musical pieces Juseirō and Shōhōrai, and Shōju's son Takamaro and other senior pages learned this music and never failed to perform it at festivals. Also at state ceremonies or festivals at ancestral shrines, officials from Hana set up large cut pines next to the washbasins, and then created models of two cranes flying toward each other. A background of mountains was cut out of paper, around which flowers were planted, and models of an old man and two deer were meant to bless the king with long life. All of these things represent the wizard Fukurokuju. Thus when Japanese artists portray Fukurokuju, they have deer and cranes following him, and he is always carrying a scroll. This represents the secret transmission of military tactics given to Sutemaru. And even now in Ryukyu at the beginning of each year young women make merry with a see-saw dance.¹ A long plank is placed on a fulcrum, the plank extending two or three feet on either side. Two young women face each other on opposite ends of the plank, and when one goes up the other comes down. As they gain momentum, they jump up into the air, sometimes five or six feet high, but they never stumble or fall off. This is meant to represent the ascent of Tametomo into the clouds. And every year on the ninth day of the ninth month, boats are set out on the Ryūtan River, each boat carrying a drum and boys in colorful attire, one standing in front and one in back. Then to the beat of the drums, the boy in front would wave a banner and the one in back would strike a gong. All would sing the dragon boat song: "His martial virtue extending far and wide, / he subdued the evil dragon. / The people have long enjoyed his peaceful reign, / this island country, ever indebted to him, / we pledge our loyalty." This custom still endures. Also, in former times when Ryukyu was divided into three provinces and there were incessant civil disturbances, shrines fell into ruin. Then during the reign of King Shō Taikyū² the Hachiman Shrine was rebuilt, and during the reign of King Shō Gen,³ Rin Sei, a descendant of Rin Tayu, rebuilt the Tenman Shrine. Such older music as Juseirō and Shōhōrai were combined with the music of Ming, but their names still survive. As for Buddhism, only Zen and the Esoteric sects are practiced. Anciently, only burial at sea was practiced, but that ended under the reign of King Shunten and burial in the ground was instituted, but based on Japanese usage, cremation was also permitted among the commoners.

¹ See illustration in chapter sixty-seven.

² 1415-1460; r. 1454-1460.

³ 1528-1572; r. 1556-1572.

In the spring of the fourth year of Bunji [1188], as they were preparing to venerate the god of Kumano and were beginning to decorate the Sueyoshi Shrine, they found that in one night trees and other vegetation had withered and many crows had died. Both in court and in the countryside people knitted their brows, thinking that this was no ordinary happening. In Japan during that year Yoshitsune was slain in his Koromogawa residence.⁴ Both domestically and abroad things had become more peaceful, and so Lord Minamoto no Yoritomo gave a command to those in Kyushu to subdue Kikai, meaning not only the island of Kikai but the whole of Ryukyu. This began when in the third month of that year a warrior from Kyushu, Utsunomiya no Shoshu Nobufusa,⁵ was given a map of Ryukyu. Then under Nobufusa's leadership Amano Tōkage⁶ joined in raising an army that was anxious to invade the islands, and thus the command was given. Hōjō Takimasa⁷ and those senior ministers under him repeatedly advised against it, but Yoritomo would not listen to them. Hearing that Tōkage and Nobufusa were about to attack as far as Mount Taiping,⁸ King Shunten summoned Shōju, Kiheiji, Tsuru, and Kame and explained the situation calmly. "Yoritomo is now at the height of his martial prestige, and has three thousand crack troops and an army of a million under his command. Though he has no reason to do so, he is about to send reinforcements to remote southern domains. Those who are few in number should not make an enemy of those who are many, and one who is small cannot withstand one who is large.⁹ Moreover, the lord of Kamakura and I are cousins. Even if Yoritomo does not know that I am Tametomo's son, how could I refuse the good will of someone to whom I am related? The best we can do is to sue quickly for peace and spare the people from misery." Those assembled were all impressed with his benevolence and justice, soon sending Rin Tayu to negotiate peace. Tōkage and Nobufusa admired his circumspect and courteous bearing, and ended up calling off the invasion. Everyone credited this to the protection of the gods, and King Shunten lost no time going to the shrine he had built at Sueyoshi where he found that the day after Tōkage had ordered his troops to stand down, the withered vegetation was revitalized and

⁴ Minamoto no Yoshitsune (1159-1188), half-brother to shogun Minamoto no Yoritomo (1147-1199), was one of the leading commanders in defeating the Taira. His Koromogawa residence was in Hiraizumi.

⁵ 1156-1234, lord of both Bungo and Hyūga provinces.

⁶ 1141-1222.

⁷ 1138-1215, head of the Hōjō clan and first regent of the Kamakura shogunate.

⁸ A mountain in Taiwan. According to a note, this mountain is also called Magu, but that is in Jiangxi Province, China. Hence it is unclear what is meant here.

⁹ From the "Liang Hui Wang" chapter of *Mencius*.

blooming, and in the place where the crows had died a clump of chrysanthemums had sprouted. In autumn when they blossomed, both their color and fragrance were quite unlike anything anyone had seen. Regarding this as a manifestation of the three deities of Kumano, they named that chrysanthemum *yadakurasu*.¹⁰ Its sprouts had been handed down for generations, and in the collection of verse *Shichidō shikō* there is a poem by the Ryukyuan poet Yō Bunkō praising this chrysanthemum:

In a purple tunic with gold-colored sash, already an object of pride,

this chrysanthemum, singularly called Yadakarasu.

In shade, not turning toward the setting sun,

taking it along with wine I shall call on Tao Yuanming.¹¹

Thus Chūzan was at peace and the virtues of King Shunten spread in their pure essence among all thirty-six islands. The people became literate in the syllabary, facilitating its use in everyday affairs. Schools were established, and there was no shortage of either Chinese or Japanese books. Kiheiji lived to the advanced age of one hundred, and Shōju to eighty. After those two grand ministers passed away, the brothers Tsuru and Kame, along with Shōju's son Takamaro, assisted in conducting the affairs of state. Shunten ruled for fifty years (fifty-one years according to *Denshinroku*) and passed away in the third year of Katei [1237] at the age of seventy-seven (or seventy-two). When his illness became severe he called his son Sumazuki¹² to his bedside and said "My father Lord Hachirō was a brave commander without equal. Though he was very loyal and just, he spent his life on lone islands and was not able to realize his aspirations. Though unworthy, I am his son. Though I shall die of illness here in Ryukyu, my mind traverses from here to my native land of Japan. My spirit will surely go to the house of my elder brother Ashikaga Yoshikanu¹³ (childhood name Tomowaka, the adopted son of Ashikaga Yoshiyasu). If among Yoshikanu's descendants there is one that bears the same 'Taka' of my canonical name then you shall know that he is a reincarnation of me.¹⁴ I shall become a general in Japan and fulfill my father's aspiration." Such were his exact dying words. Yoshikanu's son

¹⁰ The name of the crow that guided Emperor Tenmu from Kumano to Yamato.

¹¹ 365-427, one of the best known poets of the Six Dynasties period. His works include famous verses on chrysanthemums.

¹² Better known as Shunbajunki (1185-1248; r. 1238-1248).

¹³ That is, Yoshikane (1154-1199).

¹⁴ Referring of course to Ashikaga Takauji (1305-1358), founder of the Ashikaga shogunate.

was Yoshiuji,¹⁵ Yoshiuji's son was Yasuuiji,¹⁶ Yasuuiji's son was Ietoki,¹⁷ Ietoki's son was Sadauji,¹⁸ and Sadauji's son was Takauji, whose military prestige was unchallenged near or far and who was regarded as the first of the Kyoto shoguns. It is remarkable that the "Taka" of his name matches that of Shunten's canonical name Takaatsu. The second king, Sumazuki, ruled for eleven years and passed away in the fourth year of Hōji [1247] at the age of sixty-four. Then Sumazuki's son acceded to the throne. His canonical name was Yoshimoto, and he was known as King Gihon.¹⁹ Ryukyu continued in peace and the Way flourished.

Early in the morning on the fifth day of the ninth month of Bunji 3 [1187] as the servants at Sutoku's mausoleum on Shiramine in Sanuki were sweeping away the fallen leaves, they saw an unfamiliar warrior, seven feet tall and wearing armor over a brown hunting robe, leaning against a pillar of the mausoleum and cutting his belly open. They were shocked and cried out "What are you doing?" But it was too late, and they were not even able to ask his name. Thinking that he might be a remaining soldier of the Taira, they reported it to the provincial military authorities for investigation, but no one knew who he was. One attendant to the authorities, a seventy year-old man named Ochi Jirō, was from Kyushu. This Ochi Jirō carefully studied the dead man's face and said, "Strangely enough, this man's face resembles that of the young master back in Kyushu." At that everyone laughed. "Tametomo was attacked long ago by Kano no Suke Morimitsu²⁰ and committed suicide on Ōshima. His head was exposed in the capital, and many people saw it. This is either a warrior from Shikoku who was fleeing justice or a remnant of the Taira clan." Then as they were reporting it to Hōjō Tokimasa in Kyoto, one night the corpse suddenly disappeared and no one knew what happened to it. Everyone was even more mystified, either angered or amused by it, saying things like "This must be the work of a fox deity," or "It's outrageous that we can't make sense of it." Before the messenger had even returned, they sent another one to Kyoto to make a report. Considering all of these things, it would seem that although Tametomo had already come under the protection of the wizard Fukurokuju and, having been deified while yet alive and, led by the Cloistered Emperor of Sanuki back to Japan, yet while still mortal for a day he went to the mausoleum on Shiramine

¹⁵ 1189-1255.

¹⁶ 1216-1270.

¹⁷ 1260-1284. Ietoki was actually the grandson of Yasuuiji.

¹⁸ 1273-1331.

¹⁹ B. 1206; r. 1248-1259.

²⁰ This account appears in chapter twenty-two.

and committed suicide in order to fulfill his resolution, after which he shuffled off his mortal coil and was able to wander freely through Heaven and Earth, giving benefit to those alive and vowing to save others from death.

Now as mentioned previously, Tametomo's second son Tomowaka was raised by Ashikaga Yoshiyasu and took the name Yoshikanu. After Yoshiyasu's death he inherited headship of the clan, was given junior fourth rank, and was appointed First Assistant to the Minister of Civil Administration, then as Chief of Stables and Governor of Shimotsuke province, always following the shogun Yoritomo. Prior to that time, in the fourth year of Bunji [1188] when Yoshikanu was twenty-five years old and was confined to the Ashikaga residence with an illness, one day he was startled awake from a dream and summoned his inheriting son Yoshiuji (eight years old at the time) and, taking a deep breath, whispered to him, "I just now had a dream in which my birth father Lord Hachirō left his hiding place on Mount Kihara to go by sea to the capital and strike down Kiyomori, but on the way there was a huge tempest and their boats were destroyed. Then I saw how after he drifted to Ryukyu he went through more than ten years of both triumph and setback, flourishing and decline. More recently through the power of the Cloistered Sanuki Emperor he was deified while yet alive, flew back to Japan and died on Shiramine. Also, my younger brother Sutemaru became king of Ryukyu, King Shunten, but calling himself Minamoto no Takaatsu. I also saw the hidden virtues of many loyal retainers and heroic women, as well as the hidden evil deeds of flatterers and traitors. I saw all of this, and have not forgotten a single thing. From the time I was first taken in by the Ashikaga household, I have hidden the fact that I am Tametomo's son and so it is still not known in the world. But the lord of Kamakura is a very fearsome man, and if it were said that Yoshikanu had such a dream, I would certainly come under suspicion. Two or three years from now you will know the syllabary. Secretly record this dream and pass it on to posterity." Being an intelligent child, Yoshiuji memorized the lengthy account. Later he confined himself to a quiet room and wrote what his father had told him, creating a record of his grandfather Tametomo's life. He hid this away in the treasury and would not let anyone but his own inheriting son to see it. By the time of Takauji, aside from Ashikaga heirs perhaps only Imagawa Ryōshun had seen it. Ryōshun who, in his *Nan*

Taiheiki,²¹ claims that Lord Ashikaga was a descendant of Tametomo. How unfortunate that Yoshiuji's secret document was destroyed in the flames of the Ōnin War during the time of Shogun Hoshihisa,²² instantly turning to ashes. Lord Ashikaga Yoshikanu, trusting his dream, quickly set out for Kamakura in order to ascertain the veracity of the matter. Meeting with Tōkage and Nobufusa, he asked many things about Ryukyu. Among his answers, Nobufusa said "The king of Ryukyu is named Shuntan." Then Yoshikanu was even more certain that the dream was true. As Yoshikanu was imagining far-off places, in the eighth month of Bunji 4 [1188] Lord Yoritomo of the junior second rank led several thousand soldiers to Ōshū to strike Fujiwara no Yasuhira,²³ and Yoshikanu followed his orders for mobilization. But thinking that if he performed brilliantly on the battlefield he might rather incite Yoritomo's displeasure, he determined that he would restrain himself and not rush into anything. But with the power of Tametomo's spirit often working through him, he was able to defeat the enemy, and on the thirtieth of that month Yasuhira's forces were annihilated. In recognition of that divine aid, after Yoritomo's victorious decampment he ordered repair of the Tametomo shrine on Kojima near Hachijō.²⁴ Moreover, a messenger was sent to Kyoto to report this to the throne, and Tametomo was posthumously elevated to senior first rank. Also, Cloistered Emperor Go-Takakura²⁵ with his own hand wrote the framed sign for the shrine, and Yoritomo had a new statue of Tametomo in court attire created which, along with the framed sign, became an object of veneration at the shrine on Kojima. On account of this, Tametomo's two sons by Nyoko on Hachijō, Tarōmaru Tameie and the priest Jirōmaru, went to Kamakura where they identified themselves as Tametomo's sons. A messenger was sent from the chief priest of the Atsuta Shrine in Owari reporting about Shimakimi. Yoritomo then ordered that Tarōmaru govern Ōshima in Izu and that the priest Jirōmaru be given authority over Hachijō and made chief priest of Mida Temple there and was also appointed steward over the Hachirō Shrine.²⁶ Shimakimi was given two manors.

²¹ Imagawa Ryōshun (1326-1420), also known as Sadayo, was a poet and military commander. His *Nan Taiheiki* (1402) questions the historicity of the *Taiheiki*, and in its chapter 20 alludes to the account about Tametomo.

²² The Ōnin War was a civil conflict lasting from 1467 to 1477 and involved that Ashikaga shogunate and various regional daimyo. Ashikaga Yoshihisa (1465-1489) was the ninth Ashikaga shogun.

²³ 1155-1189, fourth ruler of the Northern Fujiwara in Mutsu province.

²⁴ This shrine is mentioned in chapter twenty-three. However, there is not historical attestation that Yoritomo ever credited his victory to Tametomo's divine aid.

²⁵ Prince Morisada (1179-1223) assumed the title of Go-Takakura-in upon the enthronement of his son Go-Horikawa (1212-1234; r. 1221-1232).

²⁶ These actions are also described in chapter twenty-three.

Tarōmaru was named Ōshima Tarō Tameie, and was later give control over five additional islands, and with twenty-eight children and grandchildren his household continued to prosper. And with Shiyō Gorō as his senior vassal, Jirō's governing of Hachijō earned him the respect of all the islanders, who called him the Prince of Mida Temple, and referred to Shiyō Gorō as Lord Steward. The descendants of both Prince and steward flourished through the sixth generation. Shimakimi married Inuwakamaru Yoshizane, son of the chief priest of Atsuta Shrine, Suenori, and gave birth to two sons, Yoshinobu and Yoshinao, and their household long prospered. When Tametomo first wandered to Kyushu, before marrying Shiranui, in the district of Yamakado in he province of Chikugo he met the stewards of the East and West manors, both of whom had seductively beautiful daughters. Tametomo wooed both of them but eventually parted from them. Then both of those women gave birth to sons in the same month. Tametomo was unaware of this, but both stewards could not remain calm about it, saying that they were the illegitimate sons of the young master of the Minamotos as they raised the boys. But then the Hōgen disturbance occurred and Tametomo was banished to Ōshima, and fearing that they would come under condemnation because of the association, hid the fact from the world. But then in the fourth year of Bunji, upon hearing that Tametomo's sons by a second wife were elevated in the eyes of the world, went to Kamakura where they reported the connection with Tametomo and bemoaned their lot. After investigation, Yoritomo gave the sons a manor for their upkeep. The one who was born in the east was called Higashibara no Genta, while the one who was born in the west was Nishibara no Genji, and their descendants used the surnames Nishibara and Higashibara, though later they changed the character "bara" from one meaning "belly" to one meaning "field," and even now there are people in that province who have those names. They are certainly descendants of Tametomo. Now only Ashikaga Yoshikanu did not reveal that he was Tametomo's son, but because of his relationship to Hōjō Tokimasa²⁷ he was naturally appointed to important positions. Yoshikanu was over seven feet tall and had the strength to take on thirty men. But throughout his life he did not make a display of his brawn and always played the part of a silent fool. Thus he did not provoke Yoritomo's irascibility and, even avoiding Kajiwara's slander,²⁸ lived out his life peacefully. In light of the vicissitudes of the time, one could say that Yoshikanu

²⁷ At Yoritomo's command he had married Tokimasa's daughter, Tokiko, Yoshiuji's mother.

²⁸ Kajiwara Kageyuki (1140-1200), was Yoritomo's retainer and spy during the Genpei Wars. He had a reputation as a scandalmonger.

was not only a courageous and outstanding man of the age, but also one who was farsighted. And so the fireside conversations of that age—whether in city or country, among noble or base—centered on Sutoku’s divine spirit or on Tametomo’s supernatural powers, counting the good as blessing and the bad as disaster. Lord Yoritomo had always been a devout believer in Sutoku’s spirit, frequently making donations of territory to shrines and submitting a report to the throne urging that for the endurance of imperial rule and for the welfare of the country, the spirit of the New Cloistered Emperor should be worshiped. Then as reverence for both Sutoku and Tametomo increased, so did the fervency of their divine efficacy grow year by year. Thus since Yoshikanu’s posterity were devoted to the deity Hachirō they were often able to avoid danger. In the Wada Rebellion²⁹ in the first year of Kenpō [1213], Yoshikanu’s son Yoshiuji’s armor was grabbed by Asahina Saburō Yoshihide³⁰ and just when it seemed that he would inevitably be slain, he was miraculously saved through divine aid.³¹ Then in the first year of Bunna [1352] in the battle of Musashino when Takauji’s forces were defeated and he was being pursued by Nitta Yoshimune,³² just when he was about to be cut down, he was not only saved by divine aid, but the tide of the battle turned to his victory, and he sent Yoshimune and Yoshiharu³³ fleeing back to Echigo. There were many other times when he escaped danger, finally securing command of all land within the seas, and this was all due to the protection granted by the deity Hachirō. Unfortunately, knowledgeable people must sadly conclude that the conduct of Takauji’s brothers was often quite unlike that of Tametomo, and perhaps that is why in later years the spirit of Hachirō did not protect them. By the thirteenth generation, the world was rarely at peace.

Thus we must rely on the virtues our forebears have passed on to us. It is not enough to take pride in our own good fortune. The wealth of one generation often redounds to the shame of the next, and one day’s advantage might turn into tomorrow’s loss. Confucius wrote the *Spring and Autumn Annals* because he feared that traitorous ministers and rebellious children might create chaos in the country, and that when Dong Hu stopped writing, the three states of Jin began attacking each other.³⁴ What I have written here might seem like the tale of an absurd dream, but

²⁹ A battle that resulted from a growing tension between Wada Yoshimori (1147-1213) and the Hōjō regents.

³⁰ B. 1176, Wada Yoshimori’s third son, famous for his martial skill.

³¹ According to the account in *Azuma kagami*, the sleeve of Yoshiuji’s armor tore off, and then his horse jumped across a moat.

³² 1335-1368, leader of anti-shogunal forces sent to drive Takauji from Kyoto.

³³ Wakiya Yoshisuke (1305-1340), also known as Nitta Yoshiharu, was Yoshimune’s brother.

³⁴ Dong Hu was a historian of Jin, the three states of which were Han, Zhao, and Wei.

if the reader is willing to set aside personal preferences and assume an impartial view, considering what it means to have a sense of duty and to curb one's passions, then one can understand what a noble and virtuous person Tametomo was.